

**BUILDING BETTER  
HOMES, TOWNS  
AND CITIES**

Ko ngā wā kāinga hei  
whakamāhorahora

## Second-tier settlement regeneration and revitalisation: the role of the built environment

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# Contents

Section	Topic	Page
<b>1.0</b>	Introduction	1
<b>2.0</b>	Urban shrinkage: causes and impacts	2
<b>3.0</b>	Strategies to counter shrinkage and stasis in small towns	4
3.1	Economic growth	5
3.2	Emphasising quality of life	7
3.3	Cultural economy	8
3.4	Creative economy: investment in art and cultural amenities	9
3.5	Social movements	9
3.6	Right-sizing	10
3.7	Property-led regeneration in small towns	10
3.7.1	Public facilities	11
3.7.2	Schemes with financial incentives	13
3.7.3	Residential housing developments and the key functions of a town	15
<b>4.0</b>	Using social capital to initiate change: questions of governance	17
<b>5.0</b>	Conclusion	19
<b>Appendix 1:</b> References cited by the authors		21
<b>Appendix 2:</b> Annotated Bibliography		25



## 1.0 Introduction

This literature review focuses on articles from a larger annotated bibliography that relate to the regeneration and revitalisation of small cities and towns, referred to in New Zealand as 'second-tier' settlements. The project is part of the *Regenerating for Success* research programme funded by the National Science Challenge 'Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities': Ko ngā wā kāinga hei whakamāhorahora (BBHTC).

Regeneration and revitalisation refer to the ways various stakeholders attempt to create opportunities for growth and development in places that are experiencing either stasis or decline. Much of the international literature focuses on the latter, due to the sense of urgency to find solutions to the problem. There is a strong emphasis in the literature on understanding the nature of decline in the context of economic functions and demographic change. Shrinkage can have significant negative social effects on a town and region, and be detrimental to the built environment. Property-related regeneration activities inevitably require substantial capital investment to either improve what is already there, adaptively re-purpose buildings or demolish and rebuild.

The articles reviewed here cover research undertaken and published in academic journals from the United Kingdom, Europe, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. Using single and comparative case studies, the authors report research that investigates the circumstances behind urban and regional decline, what impact this has had on small towns and what political, business and community leaders are doing to address this issue and provide a better quality of life for the residents. The authors examine the approaches and projects that have been successful, as well as those that have limited success and the reasons for those outcomes.

The literature review commences with an examination of the phenomenon of 'urban shrinkage', its underlying trends, visual signs and long-term negative impacts. We then examine the different types of strategies small towns have used to sustain themselves. The review then focuses on property-led regeneration, the types of public facilities enabled through public funding and financial incentives for developers to attract residents to specific towns or areas of a town and the effectiveness of these approaches. The importance of social capital to effect change is discussed.

## **2.0 Urban shrinkage: causes and impacts**

Sousa and Pinho (2015) argue that urban shrinkage is occurring globally and that it affects a range of territories including regions, cities, small towns and rural areas. They all have a number of factors in common including prolonged and significant population decline, often as a result of structural aging, and job loss, where residents have been forced to move to other centres to find work. The effects of urban shrinkage are not evenly distributed within countries, towns and cities. And so while part of town may be thriving or beginning to struggle other parts may be in a state of dereliction (Sousa & Pinho, 2015).

Some towns and regions have endured multiple structural and socio-economic changes over a long timeframe. Such changes include: the de-economisation of central Europe, (Liebman & Kuder, 2012; Leetmaa, Kriszan, Nuga & Burdack, 2015); rapid industrialisation through the discovery and processing of raw materials creating population growth, followed by rapid de-industrialisation connected to a change in demand for and/or use of energy resources (Liddle, 2009; Sánchez-Moral, Méndez & Prada-Trigo, 2015); major local companies going bankrupt or relocating to another country due to international competition (Liddle, 2009); and the introduction of new methods and improved technology into labour-intensive industries (Kotilainen, Eisto & Vatanen, 2015).

The impacts of shrinkage often have a long-term effect on the communities involved. The visible signs of urban shrinkage on physical structures and infrastructure can affect all property market sectors. In town centres there is often an increase in the number of vacant commercial buildings such as offices, retail outlets and shopping malls, derelict sites and on the periphery, industrial ruins, contaminated wasteland and polluted waterways. Other indicators of decline include general deterioration in the physical environment due to lack of maintenance and oversized and/or under-utilised public infrastructure and transportation systems (Sousa & Pinho, 2015; Sanchez-Moral et al., 2015). As the population decreases the tax take reduces and local authorities have less money to pay for the fixed costs of providing and maintaining basic public infrastructure (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). Although downsizing infrastructure and the demolition of 'eyesores' warrants consideration, there are considerable costs associated with it (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). Vacant and abandoned properties are particularly noticeable in inner city areas in small towns, even more so if there is an agglomeration of vacant properties that are in a state of disrepair.

The problem is compounded when, as in the case of New Zealand, commercial properties require earthquake strengthening. Government departments and major retailers require that the buildings they occupy be seismically retrofitted to 100 per cent of building code standards. This requirement places a huge financial burden on the landlord as earthquake strengthening is expensive and when commercial buildings are up for refurbishment or adaptive re-use, additional costs may be involved to make them fit-for-purpose. This can be an issue in provincial towns particularly, as a significant amount of commercial space is located in heritage buildings that can be seismically compromised. To emphasise the magnitude of the issue, a study carried out by Yakubu, Egbelakin, Dizhur, Ingham, Park and Phipps (2017) of a provincial town on the west coast of the North Island showed that 86 per cent of the heritage buildings in one central suburb were vacant. Most of the buildings were in poor condition and had issues with access and car parking. Low property values, insurance companies unwilling to insure buildings, and banks unwilling to lend money to the building owners for redevelopment has contributed to the owners' lack of motivation to redevelop (Yakubu et al., 2017). When towns are in decline or stasis, local investors often prefer to place their funds in lower-risk opportunities with higher returns, found in larger cities that provide the economic base for government, businesses and institutions that are connected to the global economy (Parkinson, Meegan & Karecha, 2015).

Physical decay and social and cultural decline can lead to stigmatisation of towns, cities and regions (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). Examples of the power of such stigmatisation can be seen in the continual struggle by rust-belt cities in the United States to reinvent themselves yet retain their authenticity. Rich's (2012) study of Scranton in Pennsylvania, formerly a centre for coal mining, iron and steel production and O'Hara's (2011) study of Gary, Indiana, a former one-industry steel mill town located on the periphery of Chicago, are two examples of cities that experienced de-industrialization and shrinkage that started in the 1950s. O'Hara shows how people develop perceptions of a place according to widely-held "narratives". Negative reporting by the press and outsiders such as documentary-makers framed peoples' perceptions of industrialization and industrial towns. Gary became an exemplar of everything that is wrong with America - high unemployment, crime, racial division and moral decay. The residents however, share different narratives, some which overlap with those held by outsiders, and others that are based on their unique experiences of everyday life in the town.

### **3.0 Strategies to counter shrinkage and stasis in small towns**

Small towns are important to a national economy and to the people who live in them. Parkinson et al.'s (2015) study of European cities showed that collectively second-tier settlements account for a large proportion of the total population of a country and contribute a significant amount to its gross domestic product. Although capital cities are typically the star performers in Europe in terms of their economic contribution, findings indicate that other cities across Germany, for example, have performed very well. Parkinson et al. attribute Germany's success to regional policy decisions, a federal system with a strong regional banking structure, influential middle-sized firms and their economic activity that is evenly distributed across cities, demonstrating that smaller settlements can thrive. Capital cities have limitations due to the cost of living, unaffordable housing, urban sprawl, traffic congestion and the deterioration of critical infrastructure. However, most countries do not have policies in place for non-core regions and second-tier settlements, suggesting that smaller centres are missing opportunities to participate in the global economy and attract more people to them (Parkinson et al., 2015).

Shrinkage or stasis is a problem that is addressed through either top-down strategies, initiated by central government, or bottom-up initiatives, developed and delivered by local stakeholders. Traditional regional and urban planning strategies, either top-down or bottom-up, are growth oriented (Sousa & Pinho, 2015; Leick & Lang, 2018). Growth strategies usually involve the built environment in some way (Sousa & Pinho, 2015; Sanchez-Moral et al., 2015). Leick and Lang (2018) suggest that growth-oriented strategies can be based on unrealistic ideas about increasing population, stimulating external investment and tourism. An alternative perspective is to conceptualize shrinkage or stasis as part of a pattern of urban development that needs to be planned for and controlled in the context of growth, slow growth, stabilisation and shrinkage (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). Whilst settlements have initiated short-term fixes, most have struggled to find long-term solutions to these problems (Mayer & Knox, 2010). Leick and Lang argue that what is needed is an in-depth examination of what is happening at the local level to understand local problems and develop new planning approaches that are based on local resources, key assets and social capital.

Finding a long-term strategy is particularly challenging when if the settlement(s) in question is in a region that is likely to be phased out by central government and not considered as a



site for future investment, as is the case of Aviles, Spain (Sanchez-Moral et al., 2015), or in regions that are economically dependent on extraction and processing of natural resources such as forestry in Leitsa, Finland (Kotilainen et al., 2015) and mining in Australia (Martinez-Ferdinandez et al., 2012). However, it is argued that under these circumstances decline due to depletion of resources should be easier to predict and can be planned for. In some cases, a series of different strategies have been used over a number of years in the one town to try to reverse the effects (Rich, 2012; Kotilainen et al., 2015) and there are cases of towns using multi-directional strategies at the one time. Unless the strategies have specific strategic goals or are linked to a recognizable concept the message will be diluted. Settlements must have a clearly defined profile with which residents and visitors can identify (Liebman and Kuder, 2012).

The following section examines the different types of strategies being used, their challenges and outcomes. These are discussed under the following categories: economic growth; the development of the creative and cultural economy; towns that promote quality of life; social movements; right-sizing; and property-led regeneration.

### **3.1 Economic growth**

A new economic niche that will provide sustained growth for small towns is difficult to find. Towns in the former German Democratic Republic, for example, that had thrived under the old regime on industry-based economic development suffered an immense shock when their industries were exposed to the global economy. Some communities had difficulty letting go of their industrial past. This was due partly to external factors, particularly the desire to capitalize on Germany's economic boom, and the influence of powerful local stakeholders who took up positions in the new administration post-1989 (Liebmann & Kuder, 2012). Their approach to re-industrialisation was old fashioned and to remain competitive, companies were forced to restructure and become highly mechanized. The outcome was jobless growth. Kotilainen et al.'s (2015) study discusses how Leiksa in Finland had to adapt many times to survive. A peripheral centre, Leiksa was dependent on the forestry industry to create jobs that were later lost through the introduction of new methods and technology. However, forays into new industries based on the importation of raw materials, such as rubber, plastics and textiles have had limited long-term success due to changes in global markets. As a result, many businesses went bankrupt or relocated offshore. One of the key questions from the study was how the community could take

advantage of the key forest resource in a way that would provide the long-term resilience required to sustain the settlement's core functions. In a similar vein, a case study by Edgington (2012) of the settlement of Muroran on island of Hokkaido, Japan, investigates how key stakeholders worked collaboratively to preserve the city as an industrial centre. Nippon Steel, the key employer, had to diversify its industrial base to prevent plant closure and local and central government and PPPs have played a significant role in the ongoing economic development of the centre.

A study by Martinez-Fernandez, Wu, Schatz, Taira & Vargas-Herández (2012) demonstrates how finding alternative economic niches for shrinking mining centres in Australia where a town is heavily dependent on one primary industry and one dominant company for economic growth is particularly challenging because depletion of the natural resource is always related to a decline in population. The key issues are that the settlements are typically geographically and economically remote from main centres and unless they have very good connectivity, they are also insulated from information networks and global knowledge flows that create and support new business activity. Furthermore, the visible environmental degradation and potential health risks created by the mining operation affects their attractiveness to new industries and workers. Each town had a different way of dealing with the decline with varying degrees of success. Mount Isa is a small, remote community that found a new role as a regional centre and service provider with a tourist industry based on mining assets. The mine's owners set up an innovation hub for R&D purposes and now market the mining technology globally. However, as the technical activities are based on a fly-in fly-out staffing system, there are limited opportunities for the knowledge associated with these technical activities to become integrated into the local economy that would benefit other businesses. Sudbury, another Australian town, sought to increase employment opportunities in the services sector and initially promoted itself as a destination for call centres with the longer-term goal of attracting knowledge-intensive industries. The city invested heavily in ICT infrastructure, however, the high-tech cluster concept was not as successful as anticipated. Fortunately for the residents, an unexpected renewed demand for nickel resulted in a revival for the mining sector and the town is now looking at longer-term strategies relating to innovation in technology and mining services, similar to Mount Isa. The findings from the Mount Isa and Sudbury case studies suggest that complete reliance on ICT based services and tourism for growth is insufficient. However, if a settlement's strategy is to become an innovation hub linked to mining, then its local

authority needs to have some kind of urban management system in place to ensure that the residents and businesses benefit from that knowledge.

### **3.2 Emphasising quality of life**

Some settlements are attempting to attract new residents and businesses by promoting themselves as alternatives to big cities, on the basis that small towns can offer a better quality of life for people.

Local authorities in Aviles, Spain for example are actively engaged in programmes to improve public services and clean up polluted waterways in an effort to attract new residents (Sánchez-Moral, Méndez & Prada-Trigo, 2015). Such strategies are more difficult to achieve when settlements have a legacy of heavy industry over a long timeframe and are continually exploited with little regard for the socio-environmental impacts. Greengairs and Ravenscraig in North Lanarkshire are located in one of the most deprived local authority areas, residents are under severe socio-economic hardship and see no end to the despair (Ioris, 2014). Greengairs was once a thriving town built on the back of coal mining and quarrying. Despite protests from locals, the open cast mines were developed into Europe's largest landfill site. Ravenscraig was once the largest steel mill in the UK and is now has one of the largest brownfield sites in Europe. Due to proximity to Glasgow, the site is slowly being redeveloped into a regional hub. However, any investment in housing and amenities to make the settlements better places to live and to attract new residents is over-shadowed by locals' concerns about the potential health risks from contamination. They perceive that they live in an undesirable area and that their towns are known for the wrong reason (Ioris, 2014).

Some towns have focused on providing particular facilities that are marketed to a specific segment. For example, settlements that provide educational infrastructure target young families and limit the emigration of young people to the cities (Leetmaa et al., 2015). Neefs, Alves, Zasada and Haase (2013) frame shrinking cities as an opportunity that has arisen from a convergence of demographic and urban transformation rather than being perceived as a threat to social structure. Small towns could be promoted as a more affordable place to retire to providing there is age-appropriate housing and public amenities such as shared green spaces for older residents to enjoy. Part of the growth strategy for Lieksa, Finland, also involved attracting wealthy retirees as well as immigrants from the EU and refugees

(Kotilainen et al., 2015). Although new residents would contribute to the local economy through pensions, savings and taxes, there is a risk is that a large ageing population will require a level of public services and infrastructure that a small settlement would not be able to afford.

### **3.3 Cultural economy**

The development of a cultural economy involves combining all of the cultural assets of a town or region into a package that showcases the heritage value of buildings, the cultural values through food, wine and crafts and provides experiential events for visitors to enjoy. These intrinsic assets and experiences are then marketed to the world. The marketing message needs to be sufficiently powerful for the target audience to differentiate between what could be perceived as very similar places.

Older de-industrialised centres have used this strategy to restructure the town's historic and cultural heritage rather than re-industrialise. Liebmann and Kuder's (2012) study of towns in the former GDR discusses how several towns opted to return to their pre-industrial economy to rediscover their roots and erase the past. It took ten years to develop new strategies and the choices demonstrated some interesting initiatives, for example, the renaming of cities to reflect their historical importance, re-identifying with their cultural history by highlighting historical buildings and monuments, re-founding old institutions and demolishing infrastructure that was no longer relevant. A study by Lazzeroni, Bellini, Cortesi and Loffredo (2013) of Volterra, Italy, a picturesque medieval Tuscan town among many others is an example of the challenge towns face to remain competitive when the 'place' is the object of the cultural economy. The town is already a service centre to surrounding areas and a popular tourist destination but wanted to be perceived as a vibrant, historic working town, known for alabaster. The town differentiated itself from other towns in the regions through staged cultural and experiential events around those core concepts for local and international visitors.

Not every town has an obvious and clear message to attract new residents and visitors. Leetma et al., (2015) also identified that many of small towns in Estonia (in the former GDR) are competing with each other for the same people. To create a competitive advantage, the communities have attempted to differentiate themselves by becoming known for something unique and recognizably attractive. Several towns are now well-known for their special events and recognised as being a 'cultural' or 'music' town. Other elected to take a complete

departure from their past and take a values approach, for example becoming known as the volunteer's town or the eco-city. This strategy is designed to attract like-minded inhabitants who hold the same values.

Avraham and Dougherty (2009) highlight some of the innovative strategies towns in Texas with less unique and tangible cultural heritage are marketed, to increase tourism and attract new residents. In the case of Austin, the strategy focused on acknowledging some of the negative images of the town suggesting that they are just perceptions by embedding the idea that the town has a brighter future. The most common strategies are more conventional and easily replicated. They typically involve association with something that is already in place, for example the "state narrative" and the symbols associated with the wild-west – the Lone Star, rodeos and cowboys - and by hosting spotlight events. Scranton, Pennsylvania, has also attempted to change a negative image through rebranding and now identified as the Electric City to commemorate the fact that it was the first city in the USA to have a streetcar system (Rich, 2012). The town has also promoted itself as being the location for the USA version of the television series "The Office" (Rich, 2012).

### **3.4 Creative economy: investment in art and cultural amenities**

Creative economies develop when industries in sectors such as art, culture, business and technology have commercial applications that inject money into the local economy. Dempseys' (2015) study of New Bedford, Massachusetts, a rust-belt city, discusses the role of tertiary educational institutions and heritage assets in the town's cultural and economic regeneration. The design school had a long history and contributed to the community in many ways including the refurbishment of numerous historical buildings that became part of the school. The institution also provided a bridge between the students and the community, the students became integrated into the town's culture and on completion of their studies, many stayed on, bought homes and established businesses and organisations that provide ongoing support to the creative sector.

### **3.5 Social movements**

Settlements that use social movements to differentiate themselves have also been successful. As the movements are global, there is a lot of knowledge and support through community networks. The movements are developed at the grassroots level so the ideology becomes embedded in the towns through the activities of their inhabitants. Mayer and Knox

(2010) discuss the collaborative endeavours of several small communities in different countries and their attempts to be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable that celebrate a return to a market economy. Slow Food and Cittaslow movements in Italy support locally owned small businesses as the suppliers of food and wine, arts and crafts. The Eco-city Movement in Sweden encourages towns to become model communities in self-sufficiency. The Economic Gardening Movement in the USA aims to keep money circulating around the local community, by encouraging residents to purchase goods from local shops. The Creative Cities Project in Albania is an example where former communist countries are assisted to transition to a market economy by promoting art and culture. Such movements give local government and community groups the autonomy to approach issues differently. Information and knowledge networks provide the opportunity to share experiences and develop and implement best practices.

### **3.6 Right-sizing**

Right-sizing is a concept associated with aligning the existing built environment with anticipated needs (Schilling & Logan, 2008). Part of this process involves stabilizing the property market through controlled land release policies and the conversion of vacant space into green infrastructure. Traditionally green infrastructure refers to unspoiled, undeveloped spaces. In shrinking settlements, vacant land offers potential sites for future parks, community agricultural plots, recreation trails and urban forests. New economic opportunities can be created from emerging green markets in biofuels and commodities. Several greening projects in larger American cities have been successful. Schilling and Logan acknowledge that there are many barriers to creating green infrastructure: potential environmental contamination that is costly to mitigate; changes to zoning systems; funding; and the risk associated with a low return on investment. For projects to be successful collaboration is required between public private partnerships, non-profit organisations and neighbourhood groups in the initial planning, project implementation and ongoing maintenance of these shared spaces.

### **3.7 Property-led regeneration in small towns**

Property-led regeneration can create positive economic effects at the settlement or regional level. Construction related activity provides employment and income for those directly involved in the buildings in the short-term. If the local community can provide the skilled labour and the businesses generate jobs then the benefits of the regeneration exercise will

trickle in to the local economy. According to Turok (1992) there are several conditions that need to be met before investment in property related projects is contemplated. Commercial and industrial property occupiers, investors, developers and lenders are location sensitive. The area must be able to supply or attract the skill base required and offer an acceptable quality of life for the workforce. Local firms that want to expand require a supply of land and buildings with specific features that will support their business. Lack of appropriate space can hinder expansion and drive businesses elsewhere. Property developers want to make a profit and take into account the costs of demolition and construction or refurbishment, rent levels and prevailing leasing requirements of prospective tenants before they commit. Although there is a broad range of construction sectors, the effects from any one segment may be short-lived due to several factors including demand patterns, cyclical investment and the finite timeframe of a construction project.

Typical property-led regeneration strategies to boost the local economy and attract new residents include investment in large-scale public facilities and amenities that enhance the physical appearance of an area, financial incentives and residential housing developments.

### **3.7.1 Public facilities**

Property can play a highly visible role in regeneration. Towns are tackling regeneration of the built environment in different ways and on varying scales, ranging from a single public amenity housed in symbolic flagship architecture to multiple projects when an entire area undergoes economic restructuring. An example of the latter is when local authorities purchase large areas of vacant under-utilised land or obsolescent structures in prime areas and then provide the physical infrastructure for large-scale development in private-public partnership arrangements (Turok, 1992). These areas are rebranded in the hope that this will attract new occupiers, jobs will be created and the benefits will trickle down to residents and businesses in the local community. The research indicates that investment in public facilities should be approached with caution because they may not result in economic regeneration in the long-term or indeed, may not be needed if the population continues to decline (Turok, 1992).

One example of substantial investment in new public facilities and infrastructure to create the perception of a modern, relevant settlement is the town of Aviles, a coastal city in the Asturias region of Spain. In addition to the rehabilitation of the historic centre to encourage commercial activity and tourism, the town has also benefitted from the expansion of the

port, a new business park on industrial wasteland, a technology centre, a cultural centre, and there are plans in place for a future innovation island (Sanchez-Moral et al., 2015). Leetma et al. (2015) observes that although the Estonian towns have attempted to differentiate themselves, they continue to position themselves as key sites for specific types of events, reflected in the pursuit of funding for flagship projects that may not be a wise investment if population shrinkage continues. In contrast, Lens, a third-tier city with very high unemployment and few cultural facilities has benefitted substantially from being selected as the site for a second Louvre museum (Baudelle, 2015). An unlikely candidate from an economic growth perspective, the motivation for Lens to be the host city stemmed from two ideological perspectives embedded in French culture – that works of art belong to the nation and should be shared and that cultural experiences play a key role in the social development of a town. The project attracted international attention through the building tender process and although the collection is not housed in an iconic building, the value of the brand is in the contents. The museum is now on the global tourist route because it is close to Paris with good transport linkages and the initiative has created additional employment for locals. The experience has led to a regeneration process under a more cohesive master plan for the town, including new residential developments because the town is now more attractive to the middle classes from a neighbouring area.

Vibrant town centres are critical to peoples' perceptions of a place because historically they are a prominent part of the culture of a town. They are the site of public buildings, many of which are architecturally significant, and facilities with which residents are familiar - libraries, art galleries, museums and retail outlets. In American culture they are typically the place where parades, festivals and civic functions are held that have symbolic meaning for the residents (Rich, 2012). Town centres can also become less attractive to residents as places to live, work and shop. Robertson (1999) found several key issues with downtown areas: the difficulty in attracting new businesses due to insufficient market area; a lack of attractions for weekend or nightlife activities; a shortage of suitable housing; a negative image; and the presence of a large 'white elephant' – the strategically located but now vacant hotels, department stores and theatres that symbolise decline and that are more noticeable in a small town. Rich (2012) discusses a multi-million dollar publicly funded redevelopment plan for downtown Scranton (USA) in the 1980s and how the luxury hotel, convention centre and large shopping mall have continuously struggled with high vacancy rates (Rich, 2012).



Other settlements have utilised their historical background and heritage buildings to create a strong sense of place and identity (eg. Liebmann & Kuder, 2012; Leetmaa et al., 2015; Lazzeroni et al., 2013). Dempsey (2015) explains how New Bedford (USA) has capitalised on its unique whaling and industrial past with a restored waterfront, museum and an old textile mill that has been converted into loft apartments. Although some mills may have little architectural significance, they dominate parts of the American landscape and provide the community with an identity. They were the source of employment for the local communities and in many cases the town developed around the mill. Kotval and Mullin (2009) in their discussion of the revitalisation of old mills in New England (USA) point out that although communities can benefit from mill revitalisation projects through increased tax revenue, environmental remediation and improved quality of life, many communities remain ambivalent towards these projects. The authors note that communities are often more in favour of a return to commercial or industrial use because it brings the prospect of jobs. This can be problematical because commercial and industrial occupiers have specific spatial and technological requirements to support the demands of the workforce and modern technical processes. Kotval and Mullin suggest that communities should be more pragmatic about mill revitalisation projects and take into account the key factors for success : location, structural integrity and versatility in reuse. As New England businesses are small, mills that can be easily divided into smaller self-contained units are more marketable. Communities must be willing to accommodate change and change in use inevitably requires changes in zoning regulations and the co-operation of the local council. Mill revitalisation projects usually require a private-public partnership agreement and financial incentives from the local council because it is difficult to raise capital from banks to renovate old properties on derelict sites. The authors observe that in almost every successful project a person or community group (mayor or business people) have stepped up to lead the development.

### **3.7.2 Schemes with financial incentives**

Occasionally governments have taken a top-down approach and offered fiscal incentives to encourage regeneration in specific areas that need assistance. The following section examines the outcomes of the Urban Renewal Scheme in Ireland and the Market Towns Initiative in Great Britain.

Norris et al. (2014) discuss the outcomes of the “Section 23” incentives provided by the Irish government between 1986 and 2006 under an Urban Renewal Scheme initially targeted at run-down inner-city districts of five cities in Ireland. The scheme allowed investment in buildings for owner occupation or rent to be offset against income or business tax. The incentives were extended to rural areas and by year 2000, the scheme included specific areas of 100 small towns under a Town Renewal Scheme. Each scheme had a different set of aims including improving dilapidated sites, attracting investment, promoting local heritage and tourism and countering suburbanisation. Although several individual schemes were successful, overall the outcomes were disappointing in terms of population growth in targeted neighbourhoods or in creating employment. The authors argue that due to the lengthy time-frame and focus on the built environment, collectively the fiscal schemes had a negative impact on the Irish economy that became apparent during the Global Financial Crisis. The schemes are criticised for over-stimulating investment in construction, funding deadweight developments that would have gone ahead regardless and for relying on the construction sector for employment. The over-supply in housing resulted in a large number of vacant dwellings and partially or uncompleted ghost estates. Rather than a ‘blanket approach’, they suggest that fiscal packages should be focused on places where demand is clearly due to market failure.

The Market Towns Initiative launched in 2001, now referred to as the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative, is a British government scheme where funds are allocated to targeted towns to assist with regeneration. The objective of the initiative is to establish local partnerships and provide funding that would develop selected towns, already recognised as trade and service centres, into hubs for future economic development (Caffyn, 2004). The policy, co-ordinated by the Countryside Agency and eight regional development agencies, was more difficult to implement than anticipated (Caffyn, 2004). The process was initiated by a self-assessed health check that would provide information about the town, determine the priorities and develop a plan to implement the projects. A study by Caffyn (2004) revealed that the main difficulties encountered by participants were associated with the frustration of working with a sub-optimal assessment tool in a very short timeframe, confusion about funding and the pressure to produce quick-win projects, rather than focus on long-term outcomes. The indifference from the private sector was noted, where the time costs of involvement outweighed the perceived benefits. The project management aspect of the initiative was particularly challenging because the partnerships involve several levels of

local government with numerous actors to inform and coordinate. Political rivalries between authorities surfaced. Tensions arose when towns, concerned about dilution of funding, questioned whether the hinterlands should be involved. In some cases the rural areas decided that they would not be involved because they could not see any direct benefit, unless the projects included improvements to linkages. The proposed inter-town relationships were top-down decisions based on geographical or sectorial clusters. Although the intention was to encourage towns to share experiences and develop complementary or joint initiatives, in practice this was unsustainable when the partnered towns were a long distance from each other. The author concludes with a list of practical 'lessons learned' that could be incorporated into other programmes and suggests that in future the role of the regional development agencies' role should be 'facilitator' not 'controller'.

### **3.7.3 Residential housing developments and the key functions of s town**

Several case studies have provided further insight into the key functions of market towns, their current and likely service roles and the impact of growth strategies such as housing developments on trade in these towns. Understanding residents' and visitors' shopping habits and service needs is essential to inform and attract investment in commercial and retail activities, the number of retail and service providers needed and where they should be located. This knowledge can in turn assist in planning for further residential housing and in the development of master plans for the town centres.

Powe and Hart (2008) show how many market towns have transformed from being rural service centres and the providers of employment to multi-functional communities. The larger, more remote towns still have a service function. Picturesque small towns attract commuters who are prepared to travel a long distance to work, they are popular second-home destinations and appeal to visitors as a tourist destination. Retirees prefer towns that offer a better quality of life. Towns need to cater to the specialised retail and service needs of users and clearly identify who they are - long and short-term residents, visitors and tourists. The ability for a small town to generate more trade is dependent on several factors - where the town is located, its proximity to larger centres, employment prospects and population growth (Powe, Hart and Bek, 2009). To encourage local trade, it is suggested that towns should integrate the three key aspects of a place that make them worth visiting: the service offer, everyday goods, food and drink, and an anchor store; convenience, compactness, ease of navigation, and low-cost car parking within walking distance of

services; and the quality of experience, the activities that contribute to the general atmosphere and vitality of the town (Powe et al., 2009).

Another key challenge is promoting settlements as being good places to live. Typical concerns about housing developments focus on the capacity of existing services and infrastructure, the design, where the new developments should be located and the potential loss of character and community through new developments (Powe & Gunn, 2008; Powe et al., 2009). Research indicates that population increase through new residential development does not necessarily translate into increased trade for town centres. Powe and Shaw (2003), Richardson and Powe (2004) and Powe and Gunn (2008) carried out case studies of several market towns in different regions across England to understand the relationship between housing development, employment, accessibility and service requirements. Findings indicate that typically new housing developments are located on the periphery of towns. Richardson and Powe (2004) found that a high proportion of new residents commuted to other centres for work and out-shopped for goods other than food. However, when developments are located in the town centre residents are more likely to use local shops and services (Powe & Shaw, 2003) and support the local evening economy (Powe & Gunn, 2008). Pubs are the most popular form of evening entertainment, however respondents expressed a desire for a wider range of entertainment options reflecting the characteristics of more affluent population (Powe & Shaw, 2003). Although most rural centres have poor public transport, good transport linkages between towns or to larger urban areas for car owners influences out-shopping and people will go to other centres for leisure activities if there are no attractions such as a theatre or cinema. Findings also indicate that long-term residents tended to display less interest in the town centre (Powe & Gunn, 2008; Richardson & Powe, 2008). Towns that have markets provided a draw to visitors from other towns, and whilst there, patrons utilised many other services (Powe & Shaw, 2003).

As the population expands within these towns and in other nearby settlements the likelihood of edge-of-centre or out-of-centre development for large format retail facilities increases (Powe et al., 2009). Powe (2012) looks at the opportunities and threats associated with the development and location of large format retail facilities in small towns in England where a 'town-centre-first' policy applies. Centralised shopping is supposed to be beneficial to residents due to the close proximity of retail outlets, ease of pedestrian access and the social interaction from being in a more compact environment. Such developments are also

approved on the assumption that they will help curb out-shopping to other town centres and draw visitors in (Thomas & Bromley, 2002). It is difficult for large format retailers to find the right location as the buildings are large and do not fit the character of the town centre, so unless the retailer is willing to compromise they tend to be located edge-of-centre or out-of-centre. Large retail parks can be a threat to town centre trade if they have the services and amenities that provide an alternative service centre to residents, for example, they invariably provide on-site parking, an issue with which town centre retailers struggle. Powe's (2012) study of two retail parks (e.g. supermarket, DIY, garden centre) in Alnwick and Amble found that fewer people were shopping in the town centres. The parks increased out-shopping for food items but there was minimal switching behaviour for non-food items due to the quality of the specialist shops in the town centre. Results from shopping precinct studies show that town centres will remain a popular choice for certain specialised items (e.g. clothing) but that they cannot compete on bulk offerings. Thomas and Bromley's (2002) study of a new covered shopping precinct integrated into existing shops anchored by a food superstore revealed that the precinct clawed back business from a retail park. The results from a Morpeth study, where an outdated arcade was transformed into an Edwardian shopping mall showed that the mall clawed back trade to the main shopping street because it provided an anchor for the town and a wide variety of shops (Powe, 2012).

Powe et al., (2009) observe that regeneration activities tend to be controversial mainly due to the disruption to trade of surrounding businesses from construction activities and the timeframes involved. However, regeneration projects also provide an opportunity for local authorities to give consideration to environmental improvements for the town centre as a whole in terms of the infrastructure, such as lighting, footpaths, cycle ways and roads that make shopping there a safe and pleasant experience for residents and visitors (Thomas & Bromley, 2002; Powe & Shaw, 2003).

#### **4.0 Using social capital to initiate change: questions of governance**

In order to develop suitable strategies to address shrinkage and stasis, the local social, intellectual and cultural capital of a town needs to be harnessed (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). In some cases a collaborative regional approach to regeneration may be more effective, particularly when towns with similar characteristics are competing against each other and finding it difficult to select a point of difference or they are in danger of being phased out of the national economy.

Parkinson et al. (2015) suggest that governments should be doing more to help second-tier settlements address shrinkage. In their view, this could be achieved through greater decentralisation of powers and resources to local government, ensuring that national policies are adaptable to local circumstances and encouraging voluntary collaboration between small cities to develop city-regions. Local stakeholders can collectively use their social capital to bring about change. It is important to involve the community in policy generation and in addition, seek the opinions of other people who use the town's services.

Commenting on experiences of the Market Towns Initiative, Powe et al., (2009) contend that regardless of some of the difficulties encountered by participants in the implementation, the initiative has had a positive impact on small towns by encouraging the formation of business driven partnerships and local body programmes. The authors discuss Keswick where a Business Improvement District group has been set up to encourage business owners to work together and find funding for specific projects. According to key stakeholders, the initiative has stimulated thinking, discussion and the development of a vision, ranging from how to capitalise on heritage assets to the development of master plans. It is argued that the latter, more visible strategies are more likely to encourage private investment. The authors conclude that although the application of local knowledge to problems is essential, engaging professionals in the process increases the chances for success.

Other studies showcase the value of collaboration between geographical networks and between local stakeholders. Baudelle's (2015) study of the second Louvre Museum in Lens shows how stakeholders from three geographical circles collectively used their social capital. It is an exemplar example of a joint initiative by the Minister of Culture and the museum, supported at central state level by the Prime Minister, the President and the regional council who provided most of the funding and project implementation expertise.

Other initiatives are exemplars of a 'self-help' approach. The study by Martinez-Fernandez et al. (2012) of mining cities highlights the plight of Yubari, a former coal-mining town located on the island of Hokkaido in Japan. The financial mismanagement of two key revitalisation projects relating to housing and tourism forced the city into bankruptcy. A resident-led regeneration council was established to work in collaboration with city officials to maintain and improve different environmental, social and cultural aspects of the town.

Research shows that initiating change in small towns is particularly challenging when countries are governed by a complex bureaucratic system with centralised decision-making. Greece is a prime example, where the economy is based on a mix of local family-owned SMEs, farmers' co-operatives and a few powerful dynastic families. Liddle (2009) discusses the implications of uneven economic development. The large cities and islands have benefitted from regeneration activities based on the cultural aspects of the economy and tourism whereas many small settlements have found it difficult find their way after de-industrialisation. The author discusses the National Planning Framework and how the different plans that evolved were ineffectual because they lacked targeted policies. The situation was compounded by the complex structure of the political scene and the role of the local mayor, the MP, regional administrators and the different agencies involved in local development. The intricate maze of clientelistic relationships between members of the different organisations and the complex interconnections between agencies and political parties at the local and central state level is holding back collective action to address decline.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

This literature review has provided a background to inform our understanding of the plight of towns facing economic and demographic decline or stasis. The underlying factors associated with shrinkage have a significant negative impact on the built environment and the social fabric of smaller settlements. The case studies in the literature review show that there are multiple ways to tackle shrinkage that inevitably involve the physical characteristics of a place in some way.

The case studies in the literature review show that whilst some settlements have found their niche, other settlements have struggled to find any long-term solutions for a sustainable future. It is critical that new industry niches selected to keep towns economically viable are resilient to changes in global markets, that benefits flow to the community and that the strategy does not result in jobless growth. When addressing the quality of life of a particular place, local authorities and policy makers need to take into consideration the long-term impacts of current activities on the land and residents and outsiders' perceptions of the settlement as a great place to live. If a specific target market is selected for in-migration, the infrastructure required to support the inhabitants should be affordable in the future. The concept of right-sizing suggests that stakeholders need to be aware that large-scale flagship projects can turn into the 'white elephants' of the future that the town cannot afford to

maintain. The case studies reviewed show that it can be challenging to establish a unique cultural economy package that will differentiate one settlement over another and is not easily replicable. Several settlements have selected to go with a particular social movement that is recognizable and has support from around the globe, but such strategies do also rely on cultivation of grassroots networks to gain momentum.

Property-led regeneration can be short-lived as it is sector and location sensitive and the construction timeframe is finite. The review showed that residential regeneration initiatives should be demand led and that fiscal incentives can have a negative impact on a settlement or region in the long-run when there is no clear market failure. When trying to attract people to towns through new residential developments, stakeholders need to understand the real function of the town, who the (potential) residents and visitors are, the mix of retail, service and social activities needed and where they should be located to create employment opportunities and the vibrancy small settlements need.

### **Acknowledgement**

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## Appendix 2: Annotated Bibliography

**Avraham, E. & Daugherty, D. (2009). "We're known for oil. But we also have watercolors, acrylics & pastels": Media strategies for marketing small cities and towns in Texas. *Cities*, 26, 331-338. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2009.09.001>**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the different media strategies that small towns in Texas use to market their 'place' to tourists and external investors. The authors apply the multi-step model for altering place image to analyse the strategies. The model commences with a preliminary analysis of issues, identification of the characteristics of the target audience and the features of the place, the goals for the target audience, the selection of a suitable media strategy, and the specific techniques and channels utilised. Qualitative content analysis of the messages, slogans, colours, logos and symbols found in advertising material and official websites is used to identify ten key message strategies.

The authors discuss two theoretical approaches for place marketing: place branding and place positioning. Place positioning requires a Unique Selling Point (USP) directed to the target audience that allows the external audience to differentiate one place from another. Place branding seeks to tie the place to a segment of the target audience (eg. leisure capital, shopping capital). Thus to capitalise on the audience's perceptions of the brand, every activity and attraction should be tied to and designed to strengthen the brand. The implication for the development of a town is that decision-makers will support initiatives that promote the brand and other projects will be side-lined.

The authors discuss the ten key strategies identified to market Texas towns and provide examples: (1) Hosting spotlight events where a singular sporting event, cultural tradition or some kind of regional product provides the basis for a celebratory festival; (2) Expanding a place's existing image by introducing new aspects; (3) Branding a place to provide an identity through finding the USP, then reinforcing the brand through messages and events; (4) Linking a city to the Texas state's historical western narrative; (5) Linking the city with a well-known place that has a positive image; (6) Linking the city with familiar brands; (7) Aligning the town's image with celebrities, generally through some kind of event such as a music festival; (8) Spinning location by emphasising a town's proximity to attractions in neighbouring towns, main roads and airports, or as the gateway to another state or country; (9) Acknowledging the limitations or suggesting that negative images are in peoples' heads, then embedding the idea of a brighter future; and (10) Spinning a liability into an asset by exemplifying a seemingly negative aspect, then making it into an event.

The authors conclude that the most common strategies in Texas involve some kind of association with a brand, in particular the well-known 'state narrative' and all the symbols associated with it (for example, Lone Star flag, cowboys, rodeos). The drawback is that this strategy can be easily replicated by other towns and does not provide a selling point that supports a town's uniqueness. A second popular approach is to host spotlight events, however this strategy is not usually tied to a USP or brand. The authors found that in many cases no effort was made to create a brand and for those who did, the message was delivered in an unprofessional way.

**Ball, M. & Nanda, A. (2014). Does Infrastructure Investment Stimulate Building Supply? The Case of the English Regions. *Regional Studies*, 48 (3), 425-438. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00343403.2013.766321>**

Investment in transport infrastructure is often used as a tool to boost local and regional economies. This paper investigates whether increased investment in physical (roads and harbours) and social (education and health) infrastructure in English regions leads to an increase in new commercial, industrial and residential building work. The study is based on the premise that if investment in infrastructure stimulates business activity and there is insufficient supply of vacant or appropriate stock then more commercial buildings will be required to accommodate that activity, the demand for more labour may stimulate local house-building and create further demand in the retail and service sector. Previous evidence on infrastructure effect at the national and regional level in the UK, Europe and USA has produced opposing evidence.

The case study consists of nine regions in England. The authors use a long time-series modelling approach utilising secondary data to capture the construction lag effects and track changes in the level of construction activity. The modeling strategy uses a standard investment flow model for each region. Findings indicate that for England as a whole the impact of infrastructure on commercial property is positive but has little impact at a regional level, with only one region, the North West, showing a positive result. Overall the regional results for housing showed a more positive impact than for commercial property, particularly for private house building. The results for social infrastructure in five regions were positive. The authors conclude that national infrastructure networks are more significant than regional ones and question direct links between infrastructure, regional employment and economic growth.

**Baudelle, G. (2015). The New Louvre in Lens: A Regionally Embedded National Project. *European Planning Studies*, 23 (8), 1476-1493. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.819075>**

This paper investigates the motivations of key stakeholders to open a second Louvre Museum in Lens, a former coal-mining centre (population circa 36,000). Lens is an economically deprived third-tier city with a very high unemployment rate and few cultural facilities. To some stakeholders investing in Lens was extremely risky, however the region does have exceptional geographical assets as it is close to Paris with good road and rail linkages. The theoretical framework for the study is 'social embeddedness', how actors collectively use social capital to bring about change. The author suggests that the project's success relied on several types of regional embeddedness: organisational, financial, institutional and artistic. The findings are based on face-to-face standardised interviews with local and national actors to gain insight into their decision-making processes and understand the social networks that evolved from the project.

The case is discussed in the context of the spate of new museum projects in Europe. The key catalyst for the activity was the Guggenheim Foundation's decision in 1997 to establish a second museum in Bilbao to help revive the local economy. The replication of the project as a local economic reviver is colloquially referred to as the 'Bilbao effect'. The author compares the decision-making characteristics of the Guggenheim Bilbao actors with the Louvre-Lens actors in terms of the four key dimensions associated with the effect: local-

global linkages; symbolic flagship architecture; culture-based urban regeneration; and economic development. The Guggenheim Bilbao project was an international place branding strategy for a regional capital city, initiated by the City mayor with the level of decision-making and funding from the international and local level. In comparison, the author argues that the motivation for the Louvre-Lens stemmed from two broader ideological perspectives embedded in French culture: firstly, that museum works of art belong to the nation and should be shared and secondly, that education and cultural experiences play a vital role in social development. The idea emerged from a joint initiative by the Minister of Culture and the museum, supported at central state level by the Prime Minister, President and the regional council who provided most of the funding and project implementation expertise. The author observes that three geographical circles emerged where actors used their social capital – the city circle (local politicians and inhabitants), the sub-regional circle (Euralens, a planning body charged with urban renewal, and the coalfield development agency) and the regional circle.

The author discusses how through the tender process the project attracted international building and landscape architects, planners and engineers and the museum is now on the global tourist route so in that respect the project has developed local-global linkages. Unlike the GB the museum is not housed in an iconic building, rather the building is functional to showcase the collection. The value of the brand is in the contents not the building. The opportunity to be the host city has led to a regeneration process under a more cohesive master plan and a substantial amount of surrounding land is earmarked for redevelopment. In terms of economic development, the museum has created hundreds of new jobs, directly and indirectly and is credited with making the city more attractive to the middleclass from the nearby Lille area. To cater for the anticipated population expansion new residential developments are underway.

**Brenner, T. & Mühlig, A. (2013). Factors and Mechanisms Causing the Emergence of Local Industrial Clusters: A Summary of 159 cases. *Regional Studies*, 47 (4), 480-507. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2012.701730>**

The authors contend that previous literature examining industrial clusters has focused either on an individual or a few case studies or on mathematical modeling techniques to investigate why they exist, how they emerge and why they are successful. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how local industrial clusters emerge and the underlying causes in the context of different types of clusters over different timeframes, industries and geographical locations. The findings are based on a meta-analysis of 159 case studies over six continents and thirty-two countries. All of the studies were written at around the same time. The evidence is presented through descriptive statistics and regression analysis of the data over the three parameters.

The authors use the theoretical framework developed by Brenner (2004) to classify the kinds of conditions necessary to the development of clusters. The three local conditions required for clusters to evolve: the 'prerequisites' to the formation of the cluster, the 'triggering events' that initiate the emergence, and the 'self-augmenting factors' that contribute to the growth process. The authors examine the two main concepts in cluster research that are associated with industry-specific agglomeration economics, specifically the older concept of the industrial district and the newer concept of the industrial cluster and innovative milieu. Thirty-four different factors are identified and attributed to the three key local conditions.

Local factors identified as prerequisites that make cluster emergence more likely include: a pool of qualified labour, wage levels, the presence of universities and public research, social networks, suppliers, industrial structure (supportive and/or similar activities present), local demand, local capital market, local policies, national policies, local culture, tradition and historical pre-conditions, geographic location, transport infrastructure, quality of life, urbanization and technology parks. Triggering events are typically associated with the actions of actors who take opportunities that are serendipitous or they are actively seeking them. Triggering event factors include: chance, crucial innovations, promoting activities, specific policy measures, historical events and a founding anchor firm. Self-augmenting processes include: the accumulation of local human capital, interaction between firms and education, co-location decisions, buyer-supplier relationships, intra-industrial spillovers, inter-industrial spillovers, co-operation among firms, spin-off industries, interaction between firms and venture capital firms, interaction between firms and policy makers and interaction between firms and local public opinion.

Descriptive statistics reveal that prerequisites and augmenting processes are well documented whereas triggering events have received far less attention in cluster research. The authors discuss the findings in relation to the three local conditions in the context of differences in time, industry and space. Time was divided into two parts – before and after 1950 and before and after 1970. Results reveal that geographical location and dependence on other industries has over time, become less important. Technology parks, existing networks in the science community and networks among different actors in the economy in general has gained more importance. Comparing high-tech with low-tech clusters, the results suggest that high-tech industries depend less on geographic location, urbanisation or co-operation among firms, however, they are highly dependent on qualified labour, public education and research and local financial markets for venture capital. Other relevant factors include, unsurprisingly, technology parks and the presence of an anchor firm and associated spin-offs. To evaluate differences in space, the cases were analysed by comparing developed and developing countries and between continents. Findings indicate that Asian firms rely more on cooperation, whereas Anglo-Saxon firms focus on urbanisation, networks, culture and venture capital. The mechanisms for cluster development are similar for developed and developing countries.

**Caffyn, A. (2004). Market Town Regeneration; Challenges for Policy and Implementation. *Local Economy*, 19 (1), 8-24. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0269094032000152809>**

The UK Government's Market Towns Initiative (MTI), launched in 2001, was intended to address some of the issues facing small towns caused by changes in inhabitant's work, mobility and consumption patterns. The objective of the initiative was to establish local partnerships and provide funding that would develop selected towns into hubs for future economic development. Market towns in the UK are defined as having between 2,000 and 20,000 inhabitants and typically have a wide range of services for their size. Market towns include rural, coastal, mining and manufacturing centres because the definition of 'market' relates to the town's potential as a trade and service centre. The purpose of the paper is to explore the two types of tensions that emerged between the different levels of bureaucracy and associated actors from the implementation of this policy. The vertical tensions relate to the kinds of conflicts that arise when a policy intended to be a community-driven, bottom-up approach, is implemented as a top-down funding programme. The horizontal tensions arise from relationships across different spatial sectors: from within the town, between the



town and hinterland, and at the regional scale between the town and other market towns. The findings are based on the author's personal experience as a market town health check coordinator in the West Midlands, supporting MTI documentation, MTI training/networking events and conversations with other coordinators.

The MTI policy is coordinated by the Countryside Agency and eight Regional Development Agencies. Initially over 140 towns were involved. In the first year selected towns were given a ten-month timeframe to complete a self-assessed health-check using a web-based tool kit. The idea was to generate information and statistics about the town and hinterland under four key dimensions (environment, social issues, economy, transport and access), determine priorities and develop a plan to implement the projects. The author discusses how the initiative proved more difficult to deliver than anticipated. The main difficulties encountered by participants in relation to the vertical relationships include the frustration of working with a sub-optimal health check document, a shorter timeframe than the 10 months promised, confusion around funding and the pressure to produce quick win projects, rather than focus on long-term outcomes. The author discusses the different responses by community participants and the indifference from the private sector, where the time costs of involvement outweighed the perceived benefits. The project management aspect of the initiative was particularly challenging because the partnerships involve several levels of local government with numerous actors to inform and coordinate. Political rivalries between authorities emerged. Horizontal tensions arose when towns, concerned about dilution of funding, questioned whether the hinterlands should be involved. In some cases the rural areas decided for themselves not to be involved because they could not see any direct benefit, unless the projects included improvements to linkages. The inter-town relationships proposed were top-down decisions based on geographical or sectorial clusters with the intention of encouraging towns to share experiences and develop complementary or joint initiatives. However, this was unsustainable when the partnered towns were a long distance from each other. The author concludes with a list of practical 'lessons learned' that could be incorporated into future programmes and suggests that the RDA's role should be as a facilitator rather than a controller.

**Courtney, P., Mayfield, L., Tranter, R., Jones, P. & Errington, A. (2007). Small towns as 'sub-poles' in English rural development: Investigating rural-urban linkages using sub-regional accounting matrices. *Geoforum*, 38, 1219-1232.**

The purpose of this article is to investigate whether small and medium-sized towns can serve as 'sub-poles' or service hubs in a rural economy and identify the kinds of services that will facilitate growth. Although the paper focuses on production linkages, the implication is that businesses occupy space. The theoretical foundation for the study, growth pole theory, suggests that growth is not uniform over a region but takes place around poles, similar to the agglomeration effect of particular industries. Growth pole strategies are typically linked to policies designed to provide solutions to regional problems and stimulate economic development. The authors discuss the Market Towns Initiative (now the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative) where funds are allocated to targeted market towns to assist with regeneration.

This paper reports on the findings from four case studies in the UK. The cases were selected from a larger study of thirty small and medium-sized towns and their hinterlands in the UK, France, The Netherlands, Portugal and Poland. The towns were stratified by size and type.

The small towns of Leominster and Towcester have 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants and the medium-size towns of Tiverton and Saffron-Walden have 15,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. Leominster and Tiverton are classified as agricultural areas and Towcester and Saffron-Walden as peri-urban areas ie. within daily commuting distance of a metropolitan centre. The authors sent out structured questionnaires to local businesses inquiring about their type, size and characteristics and the types and geographical locations of their economic transactions (sales, purchases and employment). SAMs were used to measure the spill-over effect ie. the flow of goods, services and labour that can be traced to the towns, hinterland, district, region, country and globally. An economic footprint was constructed for each firm that illustrates the degree to which each business is integrated into the economy.

The findings indicate that in terms of the spill-over effect, neither small or medium-sized towns serve as 'sub-poles' or hubs to their rural economies. The authors conclude that stimulating economic development in towns may not trickle down into the hinterland. It is more likely to have greater impact on the local economy by providing employment opportunities for local residents. If the goal is to stimulate regional growth, then investment in hinterland locations may be more appropriate. To address the different levels of economic integration, the authors examine the structural effects and the geographic effects. The findings suggest that local economic integration is strong in knowledge-intensive industries of banking, financial services, chemicals, machinery, materials manufacturing, computing and the food and beverage industry. The peri-urban towns have a different population structure to the agricultural towns and results indicate that they have a greater impact on their hinterlands.

**D'Arcy, É. & Keogh, G. (1997). Towards a property market paradigm of urban change. *Environment and Planning A*, 29, 685-706.**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between urban change and the workings of local real estate markets in the commercial sector. Urban change in this context refers to the economic transformation that occurs through the reuse of old, vacant industrial sites and the redevelopment of CBDs to accommodate the services sector. The authors argue that previous models of change have not taken into account the existing built environment and location-specific property market processes.

The authors discuss the more conventional approaches to analysing and understanding urban change. These perspectives suggest that urban restructuring and adjustment is a function of the location decisions made by businesses and households. An example is the space-access trade-off model that explains land-use patterns in terms of the location of employment clusters and transport options. The authors discuss the function of real property and explain in detail the drivers and mechanisms of the property market process. They contend that the behavioural aspect of key players in the property market is neglected in current literature. Buyers and sellers have different objectives and there are issues with asymmetrical information between market participants.

The authors present case studies of six large cities in Europe. The implications for urban development are assessed through factors that influence the structure of the local commercial property market and the public policy context that the markets operate in. Latent issues in several cases are identified. The authors conclude that in order to gain

insight into urban change, it is important to understand the drivers for economic change as well as the property market structure and policy context

**Dempsey, A.M. (2015). New Bedford Resurgent: A New England Town-Gown Story. *Journal of Urban History*, 41 (2), 207-226. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0096144214563506>**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the historic influence of tertiary educational institutions on the development of a creative economy for New Bedford, Massachusetts. New Bedford was once a thriving whaling port and leading textile centre, with the highest per capita income in USA. Although the city has fared better than many in the rust-belt region and is showing signs of growth, the town has high unemployment levels and low median income compared to the state average. The town has capitalised on the unique cultural heritage linked to its whaling and industrial past. The working waterfront is restored, improvements have been made in pedestrian access, there are new restaurants and an old textile mill has been converted into downtown apartments and lofts.

The author uses document analysis and interviews with ex-students and faculty of The Swain School of Design to explain the role the school has had on the town's cultural and economic revitalisation. A detailed account of the history of the school is provided from its inception as The Swain Free School that offered free education to children of poorer parents, to its establishment as a fine arts and design college. The author explains how the school provided a bridge between the students and the community – the city was the campus for the students so they became integrated into the city's culture and the school ran evening and weekend classes for the community. The school purchased many historic homes and with the assistance of faculty and alumni converted these buildings into educational facilities. The school engendered a sense of family between the students and on completion of their studies many students stayed in New Bedford, eventually bought homes there and established organisations and businesses that support the creative sector. The town now boasts many art galleries in the historic town centre and around the old mill village. When the school was incorporated into the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth the buildings were sold and returned to private ownership. The University is also involved in preservation and converted a former grand vacant department store into classrooms, studios and public gallery for the College of Visual and Performing Arts, a move that is attracting a new generation of young artists into the area. Times have changed and the author warns that their participation in the community is not assured. Maintaining the creative economy is challenging – if towns want to attract people and keep them there then they need to consider providing lifestyle amenities as well.

**Dines, N. (2016). Ethnographic reflections on 'oppositional heritage discourse' in two post-earthquake Italian cities. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12 (2), 102-116. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2015.1053401>**

This paper examines the politics of cultural heritage and conservation in Italy, a matter that has become a political football in the aftermath of two devastating earthquakes in Naples (1980) and L'Aquila (2009). The author examines cultural heritage through 'oppositional heritage discourse', a term that acknowledges the asymmetric power relations among stakeholders in the conservation of historic centres. The article outlines the perspectives of two key groups frustrated by the slow progress on the rebuilding of the town's historic core: heritage intellectuals and residents. The research is based on fieldwork and participant

observation in events in L'Aquila in 2010 and previous ethnographic fieldwork and oral history research in Naples. The findings have implications for other cities in Italy, and any other city that could be at risk of losing their cultural heritage in light of ongoing seismic activity.

The author compares the events in L'Aquila with the heritage activism that arose after the Naples earthquake. L'Aquila (population circa 70,000) is the capital of the Abruzzi region, a mountainous region to the northeast of Rome. The town was at the epi-centre of the quake. The buildings were so badly damaged that the historic core was 'Red Zoned', and the entire population had to be evacuated. The government responded to the urgent need for housing by constructing clusters of residential units on the outskirts of the city. The author points out that although natural disasters are physical events, in populated areas they are a distressing social experience. Disasters test community resilience and depending on the response by local and government agencies, also expose the underlying divisions within a community. Both groups exhibited different versions of 'heritage activism' towards the government's reconstruction programme. The heritage intellectuals, taking the cultural stewardship position, argued that the city should prioritise civic buildings (piazzas, fountains, churches) over houses because these buildings provide the culture and a collective identity. Residents were dissatisfied with the new settlements because they were isolated and lacked the kinds of communal facilities that support the way of life they were used to. The author describes the day of the 'Wheelbarrow Revolt' when one year after the earthquake thousands of residents passively penetrated the Red Zone to remove the rubble. Rather than stemming from respect for the architectural value of inner city buildings and concern about the state of the monuments their actions are interpreted as a symbolic gesture of 'participatory reconstruction', a community trying to get back to normal. The prospect of seismic strengthening is mentioned. The author concludes that heritage conservation also needs to take into account the social ties that are embedded in a city's history.

**Edgington, D. (2012). Restructuring Japan's Rustbelt: The Case of Muroran, Hokkaido, 1985-2010. *Urban Affairs Review*, 49 (4), 475-524.**  
**doi:<http://dx.doi.org.10.1177/1078087412463537>**

This article investigates how neoliberal ideology and policy has impacted regional development in Japan, a country characterised by a developmentalist ideology. The issues are explored through a case study of the city of Muroran (population 2010: 94,600), a centre for steel and heavy industry. The city is located on the island of Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost region. Since the 1960s Muroran has lost more than 40 percent of its population. The article is based on a longitudinal study consisting of several site visits over a 25-year period.

The author identifies the core features of the Japanese model of the 'developmental state': (1) a commitment to industrialisation that is supported by protectionist policies; (2) the use of policy tools such as funding for public works projects to even out regional disparities; (3) the system of 'enterprise welfarism', where large companies take on the moral obligation to provide their core employees with housing, health facilities and jobs even in times of decline; and (4) third sector private-public partnerships for infrastructure and redevelopment projects. The author provides a comprehensive account of the different waves of economic restructuring that challenged the developmental state model. The narrative commences in the 1970s and examines the long-term rationalisation plans of the

largest employer, Nippon Steel Corporation (NSC), and the impact on the city and its inhabitants. In consideration of the negative impact closure of the remaining blast furnace would have on the city, the NSC reconsidered their decision. The article investigates the actions of different agents in the city's restructuring through the 1980s and 1990s, specifically the response of NCS and interventions by city and central government agencies. NCS claimed a moral obligation to remain in Muroran and implemented a three-part strategy to diversify its industrial base: the manufacture of niche products for the automobile industry; transferring workers into highly-specialised spin-off companies; and offering to share their facilities and workforce with other companies. The original site is now a large industrial estate. However, the efforts by NCS were insufficient to curb continual population loss. In response the local and central government put in place a range of economic development measures that together represented a significant amount of public investment. This included funding for public works projects, the provision of vocational training and educational infrastructure, PPPs to make amenity improvements and the development of an industrial park to attract SMEs from other regions to the area.

The author concludes that Neoliberal reform did not influence the development of Muronan. The city survived due to the collaborative efforts of the key stakeholders and their commitment to preserve the city as an industrial centre.

**Healey, P. (1994). Urban policy and property development: the institutional relations of real estate development in an old industrial region. *Environment and Planning A*, 26, 177-198.**

This paper examines the impact of urban policy on property development opportunities in the context of the region of Tyne and Wear between the 1960s and 1990s. Tyne and Wear was Britain's equivalent of a rust-belt economy, a key location for mining and heavy-manufacturing industries that suffered economic decline from international competition. The region is a metropolitan county in Northeast England comprising five boroughs, each with their own administrative centres and numerous small towns.

Using historical records, property data, interviews and discussions with stakeholders the author provides a comprehensive overview of the institutional responses to economic decline at a national and regional level. The author traces the role of the private sector, locally and outside the region in real-estate development in the area. Earlier regional policies were targeted at diversifying the local economy from heavy industry into manufacturing, another form of production. Apart from the locational benefits of proximity to the EC, the region was able to supply multi-national firms with skilled labour at low cost. The paper highlights the challenges faced by property development companies finding investment value in a market that requires particular types of assets when national policy is driven by a London-based economy based on finance, consumption and a service economy.

**Ioris, A. A. R. (2014). The Urban Political Ecology of Post-Industrial Scottish Towns: Examining Greengairs and Ravenscraig. *Urban Studies*, 51 (8), 1576-1598.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.10.1177/0042098013497408>**

The purpose of this paper is to gain insight into people's perceptions of environmental change, the adjustments that they make to cope with adversity and the role that change plays in the formation of their social identity. The article is based on case studies of two towns in North Lanarkshire, considered one of the most deprived regions in Scotland. Both towns, Greensgair and Ravenscraig, are associated with the notion of 'environmental injustice'. The author carried out 35 semi-structured interviews and five focus groups sessions with current and former residents to gain insight into their lived experiences prior to and since the closure of the Ravenscraig steel mill and the opening of the Greengairs landfill site. Additional fieldwork activities included attendance at community and local body meetings, marches and campaign events.

The author commences with a discussion about the history and significance of urban political ecology (UPE) in the debate about socio-ecological change and urbanisation. UPE provides a theoretical framework to analyse environmental issues that include the power relationships that result in socio-environmental inequality. Greengairs developed initially as a coal-mining town and quarry, then as a pit mining and opencast mining centre. The conversion of one of the opencast mines in 1990 into what has become the largest landfill site in Europe triggered on-going disputes between the local residents, the landfill operators and local and national government bodies. Despite years of public consultation and protests additional landfill sites have been approved and the town is earmarked for further development as a site for a waste incinerator and energy plant. The concessions given by the landfill operator and the government were insufficient to alleviate the real concerns of local residents about health risks, depreciating property prices and the negative perception of the town as a site for the types of projects that would be unacceptable to other communities.

The Ravenscraig steel mill, located in Motherwell, had one of the largest steel production facilities in the world. The mill went in and out of national and private ownership until it was decommissioned in 1992. The brownfield site covers 500 acres and is now designated as a regional development hub. There are plans over the next 30 years to build a new town centre and provide housing, educational, sports and leisure facilities. One of the interesting spatial effects of the regeneration project is the emergence of pockets of prosperous neighbourhoods in derelict areas that run counter to the reurbanisation policies of neighbouring Glasgow. Despite assurances from the council and developers that the land has been decontaminated, locals expressed their concerns about the health and safety risk of ground contamination from heavy metals.

The author notes that in both cases the level of concern differed among the locals according to their location, age and the amount of time they have lived in the area. Those most affected were residents who lived closest to the sites, elderly people and those who have lived in region for a long time.

**Kotilainen, J., Eisto, I. & Vatanen, E. (2015). Uncovering Mechanisms for Resilience: Strategies to Counter Shrinkage in a Peripheral City in Finland. *European Planning Studies*, 23 (1), 53-68. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.820086>**

The purpose of this paper is to examine strategies for countering shrinkage in cities that are economically dependent on the extraction and processing of natural resources. The authors observe that change is not new to industry-dependent peripheral settlements and they have

learned to adapt to survive. The authors anticipate that the strategies and mechanism uncovered from the case study will contribute to the development of theories about resilience and adaptability in the context of the industrialised regions of Northern Europe.

The article is based on a longitudinal study of Lieksa, a municipality in Eastern Finland. The population has more than halved since 1959. Although Lieksa has only 12,800 inhabitants it is classified as a small city, with a large rural area and an urban core. The authors use quantitative and qualitative methods including population and employment data, local and regional planning documents, fieldwork and interviews with city administrators and local business owners to examine over 40 years of transformation. The authors explain how shrinkage in Lieksa is a result of rapid population growth, when the economic base expanded from agriculture to the equally labour-intensive forestry industry, followed by accelerated population decline when the introduction of new methods and improved technology for logging resulted in significant job losses.

Most of the strategies are growth oriented and rely on economic policies and attracting new residents. Examples of economic policies include the establishment of the welfare state in the 1960s that created workplaces and jobs in city administration (the largest employer today), the education sector and social services and government subsidies for companies willing to locate their production to peripheral centres. The city has undergone further industrialisation and diversification but in some cases the benefits were short-lived. New industries based on the importation of raw materials such as rubber, plastics and textiles were exposed to changes in global markets, leading to closures or relocation. More recent strategies have witnessed a return to the forestry sector and expansion into the processing of wood products. Strategies aimed at increasing employment opportunities in the service sector include the relocation of call centres and the development of nature tourism. The city aims to attract new residents, wealthy retirees, immigrants from the EU and refugees, on the basis that a small city can offer an improved quality of life. Although this strategy may increase local revenues there is a risk that the ageing population will require a level of public services that the city may not be able to afford.

The authors explore the concept of resilience and for the purposes of this paper define the term in the context of a community's ability to sustain its core functions. The case study provides evidence that the community was able to maintain partial, short-term resilience. The authors conclude that the city must now discover a way to find a sustainable means of support for a declining population. One of the key questions from the study is how locals and non-locals can take advantage of the forest resource to provide the kind of long-term resilience required.

**Kotval, Z. & Mullin, J. (2009). The Revitalization of New England's Small Town Mills: Breathing New Life into Old Places. *Local Economy*, 24 (2), 151-167.**  
**doi:<http://dx.doi.org.10.1080/-2690940902717121>**

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how communities in the six states of New England have experienced the revitalisation of their old town mills and to identify the key factors behind the revitalisation process. The article is based on the authors' previous research and their active involvement in mill revitalisation projects.

The authors provide a history of mills in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century New England. Mills were the economic powerhouses of their local communities and in some cases the town developed around the employment base. Although the buildings have little architectural significance, they are iconic because the mills dominated the landscape and provided the communities with an identity. The authors explore the different factors that determine the feasibility of adaptive reuse (as opposed to historic preservation) and provide practical examples. The physical factors refer to the location, the general condition of the building and site, structural integrity, how it could be subdivided into usable spaces, building code requirements and the possibility of environmental contamination from previous use. The market factors help determine what kinds of uses are viable. An analysis of regional and local trends and statistics should provide guidance as to where the demand lies. As there may be several options (residential, commercial, retail, industrial, educational and cultural) a cost benefit analysis for various revitalisation scenarios is recommended. How the mill fits into the town's Master Plan should also be considered.

The authors explain that although there are hundreds of mills in New England, there is no comprehensive regional business case to support revitalisation so the approaches tend to be localised. They argue that although communities can benefit from mill revitalisation projects through increased tax revenue, environmental remediation and improved quality of life, many communities remain ambivalent towards these projects. The authors note that communities are often more in favour of a return to commercial or industrial use because it brings the prospect of jobs. This can be problematical because commercial and industrial occupiers have specific spatial and technological requirements to support the demands of the workforce and modern technical processes. Communities must be willing to accommodate change and change in use inevitably requires changes in zoning regulations. They conclude that successful mill revitalisation projects usually require a private-public partnership agreement because it is difficult to raise capital from banks to renovate old properties on derelict sites. The authors examine the different types of PPPs and the kinds of incentives local councils offer. They note that in almost every successful project a person or community group (mayor or business people) have stepped up to lead the development.

The authors conclude with a list of 'lessons learned'. They suggest that communities should be selective about mill revitalisation projects. The key drivers are location, structural integrity and versatility in reuse. As New England businesses are small, mills that can be easily divided into smaller self-contained units are more marketable. The authors also suggest that communities should look more closely at regional cluster linkage strategies when selecting mills.

**Lazzeroni, M., Bellini, N., Cortesi, G. & Loffredo, A. (2013). The Territorial Approach to Cultural Economy: New Opportunities for the Development of Small Towns. *European Planning Studies*, 21 (4), 452-472. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.722920>**

This article examines the role and relevance of the cultural economy in small towns from a territorial perspective. The authors examine the relationship between heritage, cultural activities and urban development strategies through a case study of Volterra, a small town in the provincial district of Pisa, Tuscany (population 2010: 11,777). There are two key objectives: to identify the characteristics perceived as the key elements of urban identity and how these assets have been integrated into the town's place branding strategy. The findings are based on two methodologies, surveys and interviews. The surveys of insiders



(town and hinterland residents) gained insight into their opinions of the town, their sense of belonging and the role of cultural identity. An environmental surveying technique was used to identify outsiders' (Italian and foreign tourists) perceptions of the town and the role of cultural heritage in their tourist experience. Face-to-face interviews with local leaders sought feedback on the survey results from the insiders' and outsiders' perspectives. The results are compared with the way the town is promoted in advertising material and the different types of cultural events.

The authors distinguish between the two theoretical approaches that connect the cultural economy with urban development. The industrial approach refers to large city-scale economic activities where the cultural economy is based on cultural clusters (art, heritage, media, music) formed from agglomeration processes that link to other economic sectors. The territorial approach, taken in this study, focuses on activities at the local scale and highlights the role of intrinsic cultural heritage in place identity where the place itself is the object of the cultural economy. The authors discuss the meaning of cultural heritage from the perspectives of identity and image. They argue that the material and immaterial signs and the value of what is produced are what the local community identifies with. The concept of local authenticity is discussed and the risk of being fixated on traditions that can preclude openness to new activities. Cultural assets also play an important role in defining the image of a region or city that in turn reflects the identity through place branding. They also point out that some small towns do not have the resources to promote cultural events, therefore joint initiatives may be required that forms an identity for the entire area.

Volterra is an important urban centre providing services in commerce, banking and health sectors to surrounding areas. The town is also an important tourist destination due to its picturesque setting, intrinsic heritage value and cultural value through food, wine and artisan created alabaster products. The town also promotes staged cultural events around heritage assets and experiential events that provide visitors with the opportunity to relive the town's medieval past. Findings indicate that insiders have a very positive image of the town. Both groups appreciate the cultural, heritage and aesthetic characteristics. Residents emphasise the quieter pace of life, healthy physical environment and the picturesque landscape. The overwhelming majority of insiders do not want anything to change. The town is perceived as a historic, touristic town known for alabaster. Insiders do not want the town to be a run-of-the-mill tourist destination but identified with the image of a vibrant, working historic town. Outsiders had different perceptions of the town depending on whether they were Italian tourists or foreign tourists because these sectors have different ways of travelling. Respondents appreciated the landscape and historical characteristics, with foreigners emphasising the towns' atmosphere. Although respondents mentioned the 'typicalness' of Volterra as a medieval Tuscany town they also commented on its uniqueness. The authors suggest that many small towns face the same kinds of dilemmas going forwards - how to remain competitive and how to link cultural heritage and modernity through the creative economy. These decisions rest much on the type of tourism the towns want to encourage. They point to the fast tourism approach of neighbouring San Gimignano – large numbers of tourists, shorter stays and high prices. Slow tourism is an alternative path, although it may be more difficult to deliver in terms of a prolonged experience. The authors also discuss the town's attempts at developing a logo and that a regional brand strategy may be better for smaller towns.

**Leetmaa, K., Kriszan, A., Nuga, M. & Burdack, J. (2015). Strategies to Cope with Shrinkage in the Lower End of the Urban Hierarchy in Estonia and Central Germany. *European Planning Studies*, 23 (1), 147-165. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10/1080.09654313.2013.820100>**

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how small towns in Estonia and the former German Democratic Republic have responded to de-economisation, an ageing population and population decline since the collapse of socialist regimes. Under the socialist state small towns were administered centrally, after the transformation they became self-governing. The study has two objectives: firstly, to examine the major strategic development projects undertaken to cope with their peripheral location and secondly to examine the role of local social capital in achieving those strategic aims. The study focuses on two historically diverse regions with different economic bases - the agricultural region of South Estonia and the industrial region of Saxony in Central Germany. The authors examined ten 'best practice' towns, five in each region, ranging in population from around 2,500 to 20,000 inhabitants. Interviews were carried out with key local people who are actively engaged in the administration and development of the town - members of local governing bodies, residents involved in education, sporting and cultural activities and local entrepreneurs. The smallest and largest towns in each region were selected to provide a comparative case study for the paper.

The authors report that, generally, all of the small towns in the study are trying to promote themselves as desirable residential and business locations, as an alternative to larger cities. There is an emphasis on providing educational infrastructure to attract young families to the towns and to limit the out-migration of young people. The findings reveal that some towns are more politically stable than others and have faced different challenges. All of the towns in both regions have discovered new economic niches, however, their approach is different and this may be tied to their political history. Under Soviet rule small towns received investment from the 1970s onwards because they were the support hubs for the growing agricultural economy. The Estonian towns are anchored in restructuring their historic and cultural heritage, for example as cultural and music towns. Unlike Estonia, towns in Saxony had no centralised assistance programme. According to the authors the towns appear to have made a fresh start. They also comment that the towns feel that they are competing with each other – they all share a common vision to be family, business and citizen friendly. The authors discuss how the towns have attempted to differentiate themselves by becoming known for something, for example as a volunteer's town or an eco-city. The authors conclude that, particularly in Southern Estonia, the shrinkage process has not been fully accepted. This is reflected in the pursuit of funding for projects that may be unnecessary in the long-term if the population continues to decline.

**Liddle, J. (2009). Regeneration and Economic Development in Greece: De-industrialisation and Uneven Development. *Local Government Studies*, 35 (3), 335-354. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03003930902999472>**

The purpose of this article is to investigate the mechanisms of governance and their influence on revitalisation efforts in Greece. Regardless of numerous attempts over the past thirty years to modernise the public sector, Greece is still governed through a complex bureaucratic system with centralised decision-making. The country has a combination of unusual socio-economic and physical characteristics. Greece is traditionally a nation of local family-owned SMEs, farmer's co-operatives and a few, although extremely powerful

dynastic families. The terrain is difficult in parts and there are many isolated settlements some distance from the capital that have no political voice. The author discusses how the more prominent cities of Athens and Thessaloniki and the Greek Islands have benefitted from regeneration activities based on tourism and the cultural aspects of the economy. In contrast smaller centres on the mainland have experienced severe de-industrialisation due to globalisation and are now regarded as problem areas. The author examines three cases where the key employee base either went bankrupt or relocated to another country: Kastoria (approximately 50,000 inhabitants) once a manufacturing centre for fur clothes; Naoussa (approximately 32,000 inhabitants) formerly a fruit and textile centre; and Lavrion (approximately 7,000 inhabitants) once a mining centre, now a designated satellite port and industrial park location.

The author examines the role of key players at the national and local level, the importance of political parties and the issue of 'clientelism', the different types of partnerships and levels of government intervention in regeneration processes. The author discusses the National Planning Framework and the different plans that have evolved to address uneven economic development across Greece. The plans were ineffectual as they lacked specific policies to tackle economic decline. The author examines the structure of the political scene and the role of the local mayor, the MP, regional administrators and the different agencies involved in local development. The local development companies (LDC's) are the only regeneration partnerships and they have access to EU funding whereas the NELE is the main body for economic development. There is little policy-based connection between the two although members tend to be local body leaders with business interests. There are a multitude of local labour syndicates, farmers' co-operatives and unions that, through local politicians, lobby national government for access to markets and for state aid. Responses by central state government to company closures are reactive and include vocational programmes to upskill workers, social welfare packages for redundant workers, postings in government agencies and subsidies to existing businesses to take on more employees.

The author contends that at the local level the actor network is dense and that the intricate maze of clientelistic relationships between members of the different organisations and the complex interconnections between agencies and political parties at the local and central state level is holding back collective action to address decline.

**Liebmann, H. & Kuder, T. (2012). Pathways and Strategies of Urban Regeneration-Deindustrialised Cities in Eastern Europe. *European Planning Studies*, 20 (7), 1155-1172. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2012.674348>**

This article examines urban development policy responses to regeneration in the context of medium-sized deindustrialized cities (20,000 to 100,000 inhabitants) of the former German Democratic Republic. The findings are illustrated through case studies of five cities. The political upheaval in 1989 and economic shock from exposure to the global economy triggered a chain of events that resulted in urban shrinkage. The authors discuss shrinkage as a process that involves societal and spatial change and describe the key characteristics of shrinkage in the GDR. The authors use document analysis and expert interviews conducted between 2004 and 2008 to gain insight into the impact of institutionally determined development pathways of regeneration and the different strategies that have emerged from the process. The concept of path analysis suggests that cities tend to follow the same patterns of development over long periods of time. Many medium-sized cities in the GDR

were initially structured around industrial activities so the thinking and development orientation was initially in support of economic development based on industry. The authors attribute this response to several external factors and the influence of powerful local actors who transitioned to important positions within the new administration post-1989. It took ten years for the cities to critically examine old dependencies and take the initial steps to developing new strategies.

The authors identify three types of regeneration strategy. Strategies aimed at the return to a pre-industrial economy involved re-naming the city to reflect historical importance, re-identifying with cultural history through historical buildings and monuments, re-founding old institutions and demolishing infrastructure that is no longer relevant. The second strategy involved positioning the city as a key centre for specific types of events through large-scale public projects. Cities that selected a re-industrialisation strategy sought to benefit from Germany's economic boom but due to industry restructuring the outcome was jobless growth. The authors conclude that although the reorienting process produced new ideas, it lacked specific strategic goals. Stakeholders struggled to create clearly defined city profiles. They were reluctant to let go of the existing commercial-industrial path or discard potential pathways resulting in multi-directional strategies for some cities. Conflicts of interest arose when a new path, in particular third sector industries based on culture, took precedence over the old industrial path.

**Martinez-Fernandez, C., Wu, C-T., Schatz, L.K., Taira, N. & Vargas-Herández, J.G. (2012). The Shrinking Mining City: Urban Dynamics and Contested Territory. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36 (2), 245-260. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01094.x>**

This article examines shrinking mining cities where the city is heavily dependent on one primary industry and one dominant mining company for economic growth. The findings are based on case studies of four mining towns: Mount Isa (Australia), Sudbury (Canada), Yubari (Japan) and Cerro de San Pedro (Mexico). The authors take a mixed methods approach to data collection using in-depth interviews, business and census data, direct observation and document analysis.

The authors discuss how shrinking mining cities are differentiated from other types of shrinking city. Decline is always related to the mining operation and the underlying reasons for this are examined. Mining centres are unique, however they do share some common characteristics that make it more challenging to find alternative economic niches. Key characteristics identified include physical and economic remoteness from main centres, their isolation from information networks and global knowledge flows and that the visible environmental degradation and potential health risks affects their attractiveness to new industries and workers. Each city had a different way of dealing with the decline with varying degrees of success. Mount Isa is a small, remote community that found a new role as a regional centre and service provider with a tourist industry based on mining assets. The mine's owners set up an innovation hub for R&D purposes and market the mining technology globally. However, as the technical activities are based on a fly-in fly-out system, there are limited opportunities for the knowledge side to become integrated into the local economy. Sudbury initially promoted itself as a destination for call centres with the longer-term goal of attracting knowledge-intensive industries. The city invested heavily in ICT infrastructure, however, the high-tech cluster concept has not developed as expected. The

renewed demand for nickel resulted in a revival for the mining sector and the city is now looking at longer-term strategies relating to innovation in technology and mining services, similar to Mount Isa. Yubari is a former coal-mining town located on the island of Hokkaido. The financial mismanagement of two key revitalisation projects (housing and tourism) forced the city into bankruptcy. The city took a 'self-help' approach and established a citizen led regeneration council that worked in collaboration with city officials to maintain and improve different environmental, social and cultural aspects of the city. Cerro de San Pedro is a small historic gold and silver mining village. A coalition of local residents, neighbourhood associations, environmental groups and international organisations successfully resisted a proposed open-pit mining operation that would have damaged the town's historic core and caused significant environmental degradation.

The authors observe that in some respects decline in mining cities is predictable providing a window of opportunity for city planners to develop appropriate adjustment strategies. The findings from the Mount Isa and Sudbury case studies suggest that reliance on ICT based services and tourism for growth is insufficient. However, if the strategy is to become an innovation hub linked to mining, then the city councils need to have some kind of urban management system in place to ensure that the city and inhabitants benefit from that knowledge. The findings from Yubari and Cerro de San Pedro emphasise the value of community participation and leadership in shaping the future of cities. The latter case highlighted the willingness to protect the town's heritage and ecosystem from further development through mining operations at the expense of jobs.

**Mayer, H. & Knox, P. (2010). Small-Town Sustainability: Prospects in the Second Modernity. *European Planning Studies*, 18 (10), 1545-1565.**  
**doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2010.504336>**

According to the authors, small town research tends to focus on individual issues such as economic sustainability, liveability and quality of life for citizens. This article takes a different perspective and examines the collaborative endeavours of small towns (defined as urban places with no more than 50,000 residents) to become environmentally, socially and economically sustainable in the context of social movements. The articles highlight best practice based on four case studies: the Slow Food and Cittaslow Movements in Italy, the Eco-city Movement in Sweden, Economic Gardening in the USA and Albania's Creative Cities Project. The authors also identify the potential downsides to these movements. Data was collected over a 5-year period using expert interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

The authors argue that although a significant percentage of a country's total population resides in small towns, they have been bypassed in the national policy initiatives. They lack sufficient comparative advantages to attract the kind of investment in transport infrastructure and agglomeration economies that stimulate growth. The discussion is constructed around the theoretical framework of 'modernity', the different phases of modernisation of industry, institutions and politics. The authors explain that in the 'first modernity' urban development policy was framed at a national level based on inter-city competition within one country. Small towns are now facing the 'second modernity', global scale competitiveness. The authors discuss the well-documented legacy of the first modernity. Although some towns have experienced economic revival by attracting retirees, second-home owners and investment from multi-nationals, most small towns have struggled

to find long-term solutions. The authors argue that decentralisation and transition into the second modernity can have positive outcomes for small towns because it provides local government and community groups with the autonomy to approach issues differently. Grassroots movements have emerged that involve two key activities: networking between local groups, businesses and government and the formation of collaborative partnerships with other towns, nationally and internationally. The movements are explained in terms of sensibilities, as a measured response to the 'second modernity'.

The first sensibility is the antithesis to the fast pace of life: local, organic and slow. The **Slow Food Movement** was conceived as a counter to the growing number of fast food outlets and associated eating habits considered unhealthy, culturally invasive and detrimental to the Italian way of life. The movement has a network of local chapters across 100 countries including New Zealand (Matakana). The movement emphasises local distinctiveness in the types of foods produced, traditional recipes and supporting locally owned small businesses as the key suppliers. The **Slow City Movement** is based on similar ideas. In addition to local cuisine and wine, the movement promotes local arts and crafts, cultural traditions and a sense of place through the enhancement and management of the built and natural environment. The second sensibility, environmentalism, is associated with achieving sustainability through environmental, economic and social objectives. The **Eco-city Movement** is a network of municipalities that use environmental indicators to monitor progress in, for example, carbon emissions, energy usage and waste. The authors outline the efforts of the residents of Robertsfors, Sweden in their journey to becoming a model community in self-sufficiency and renewable resources. The eco-municipality model is being replicated around the world, in the USA, Ireland, Japan, Africa and New Zealand. The third sensibility, entrepreneurship, refers to the retention and creation of businesses as 'alternative economic spaces'. **Economic Gardening** is a strategy that aims to grow businesses from within the community rather than expending resources trying to attract investment from external sources. The key objective is to keep money circulating around the local economy by encouraging locals to purchase goods from local shops owned by locals with the broader intention is that self-reliance will help protect communities from external economic shocks. The authors discuss the case of Littleton in Colorado (population circa 41,000). The fourth sensibility, creativity, is related to the creative class concept and the development of the cultural economy where art, culture, knowledge and creative ability intersect and act as agents of change. The **Creative Cities Project** initiated by the Swiss government to assist communist countries transition to a market economy focuses on promoting art and culture. The authors discuss the town of Pogradec where a group of enthusiastic citizens initiated small projects that acted as a creative trigger for further projects and events that have become regional attractions.

The authors conclude that place promotion and 'smokestack chasing' strategies are risky because, unlike the grassroots approach, they are not embedded in the local economy. The partnerships provide small towns that are often outside of information and knowledge networks with the opportunity to share their experiences and implement best practices.

Miot, R. (2015). Residential Attractiveness as a Public Policy Goal for Declining Industrial Cities: Housing Renewal Strategies in Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne (France). *European Planning Studies*, 23 (1), 104-125.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.820098>

This paper investigates the concept of residential attractiveness as a central feature of urban renewal strategies for ancient inner city areas in declining cities. The concept is explored through case study analysis of three significant post-industrial cities that have experienced transformation from a manufacturing base to a service centre: Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne. These cities share similar characteristics: high unemployment among industrial workers, old private rented housing in very poor condition, out-migration by young families to the suburban rings, in-migration by young professionals and the unemployed and socio-specialisation.

Residential attractiveness has multiple interpretations. The first interpretation frames residential attractiveness from the broadest perspective in terms of intercity competitiveness. A territory already has the kinds of resources (eg. geography, demography, social conditions and culture) that attract further resources (economic, financial and human). The concept is linked to city branding that is reflected in the type of property projects that symbolise a city's identity. The second definition is linked to residential mobility and the creative class theory which posits that well-educated young people are drawn to cities that not only provide jobs but provide a lifestyle that is reflected in the kinds of entertainment venues, bars and restaurants the city offers. The third interpretation links residential attractiveness to policy interventions aimed at balancing out socio-spatial inequalities. The key strategy is to create social diversity through housing by attracting wealthier people to deprived areas.

Critics of residential attractiveness argue that maintaining a social mix is difficult because of the gentrification process that arises from policy initiatives. The case studies are explored in the context of the National Housing Upgrading Policy and two subsidy-based tools used by local councils. Funding is provided for owners and private renters to upgrade their properties in inner city heritage areas with the intention of encouraging owner-occupation and attracting the affluent middle-class. The three local authorities in this study endeavoured to develop new initiatives by incorporating two additional policies aimed at social intervention, shaped to local conditions to counter the gentrification process. What resulted are three local interpretations of residential attractiveness. The authors focus on Roubaix, the smallest city (population 2011: 94,186). The city followed a growth-oriented populating strategy, whereby perimeter brownfields sites were developed to provide a particular housing product for a target market (low and middle-income owner-occupiers). On further analysis the strategy has met with limited success because of the difficulties in establishing an intermediate supply due to market conditions. Specifically, the council has had problems in attracting developers to these brownfield sites and to provide housing for their target market at an affordable price and quality compared to what is available in the old city centre core or in the suburbs. The authors conclude that addressing shrinkage through housing may have negative effects if deprivation among the local population continues and policies only focus on attracting a wealthier population.

**Nefs, M., Alves, S., Zasada, I. & Haase, D. (2013). Shrinking cities as retirement cities? Opportunities for shrinking cities as green living environments for older individuals. *Environment and Planning A*, 45, 1455-1473. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1068/a45302>**

This exploratory paper examines the concept that shrinking cities could gain a competitive advantage over other cities by becoming green retirement and health tourism centres. The strategy capitalises on the convergence of two demographic and urban transformations, ageing and city shrinkage, and two assets, vacant space and green space.

The paper takes an interdisciplinary perspective to provide an overview of the topic and to examine the relationship between Quality of Life, a multi-dimensional concept with behavioural and psychological dimensions, and Urban Green Space. The authors observe that although shrinkage can have negative connotations, it also presents an opportunity to increase the quality of life for retirees seeking an affordable place to retire in. The authors posit that retirees, who have affordances or needs, are on the demand side whereas shrinking cities are on the supply side. The authors develop four key criteria to describe the age appropriate affordances for elderly people: accessibility; design and equipment; safety and orientation; and community building. Opportunities arise when there is a match between demand and supply in Quality of Life. The authors posit that immigrating retirees increase the population, contribute to revenue through pensions, savings and taxes and will increase demand for infrastructure and health services. They will require affordable housing and green space that is age-appropriate. Shrinking cities can supply the workforce, vacant property that can be renovated, the land at lower cost and under-utilised open-space that can be transformed into shared green space for exercise and recreation. The authors use Schöbel's (2006) taxonomy of urban green space to identify the qualities and challenges of those spaces in the context of the four criteria.

Two examples of retirement migration are discussed and compared in the context of the QoL/UGS relationship: Leipzig (Germany) and Walcharen (the Netherlands). Note that these cities are larger than the second tier settlements that form the basis for the study, however the model could be applied to other centres. The authors acknowledge that putting the concept into practice can be challenging. They offer some guidelines and methods that warrant further investigation.

**Norris, M., Gkartzios, M. & Coates, D. (2014). Property-Led Urban, Town and Rural Regeneration in Ireland: Positive and Perverse Outcomes in Different Spatial and Socio-Economic Contexts. *European Planning Studies*, 22 (9), 1841-1861. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.806434>**

Between 1986 and 2006 the Irish government offered fiscal incentives to encourage the construction and refurbishment of housing and commercial buildings for owner-occupation or for rent. The investment could be offset against income or business tax. The packages, commonly referred to as "Section 23" incentives, were initially provided under an Urban Renewal Scheme and targeted at run down inner-city districts of five cities that were suffering from large population decline due to suburbanisation. In the 1990s they were available to declining city suburbs and in 1999, to specific areas of 38 large towns as well as a sparsely populated rural area under a Rural Renewal Scheme. In 2000, the incentives were expanded to targeted areas of 100 small towns under the Town Renewal Scheme.

This paper evaluates the schemes and assesses the individual and collective impacts of the incentives on the different districts in the context of significant changes in Ireland's economy over the 20-year period – from prolonged recession to economic boom. The authors use regression analysis of area census data on three variables as indicators of the scheme's stated objectives - population, employment and the number of private rented dwellings. The authors then create a model to test the relationship between those objectives and the outcomes in terms of the number of vacant properties and ghost estates.



The paper highlights how each scheme had a slightly different set of aims. The purpose of the Urban Renewal Scheme was to promote urban renewal by addressing dereliction and attracting investment. Justification for extending the fiscal package to towns was to improve dilapidated sites in specific areas, promote local heritage and tourism and counter suburbanisation trends. The purpose of extending the incentives to five counties under the rural scheme was to address population decline and stimulate economic growth. The authors conclude that collectively the schemes failed to deliver on the objectives in target areas. Individually the schemes did have varying success. The Urban Renewal Scheme helped eliminate dereliction and made a positive impact on employment but had no impact on private rented stock or population growth in target neighbourhoods. The take-up of the Rural Renewal Scheme was high resulting in new housing for existing residents but the scheme failed to attract new people to the area or create employment opportunities. Response to the Town Renewal Scheme was low and the incentives had little impact on addressing dereliction or meeting the aims discussed previously. The authors argue that due to the lengthy time-frame and spatial focus, collectively the fiscal schemes had a negative impact on the Irish economy that became apparent during the Global Financial Crisis. The schemes are criticised for over-stimulating investment in construction, funding deadweight developments that would have gone ahead regardless and for relying on that sector for employment. The over-supply in housing resulted in vacant dwellings and partially or uncompleted ghost estates. They suggest that fiscal packages are more useful in places where demand is clearly due to market failure.

**O'Hara, S.P. (2011). "The Very Model of Modern Urban Decay": Outsiders' Narratives of Industry and Urban Decline in Gary, Indiana. *Journal of Urban History*, 37 (2), 135-154. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.10.1177/0096144210391613>**

Gary, Indiana is a former steel city in the American rustbelt. To many people the city is an exemplar of everything that is wrong with America – high unemployment, violent crime, racial division and moral decay. The author uses document analysis, mainly opinions and statements sourced from newspaper clippings and magazine articles, to trace the perceptions of outsiders from different backgrounds concerning the changes that occurred in Gary from the 1950s onwards.

The city started out as a one industry steel mill town on the periphery of Chicago, two features cited as significant historical drawbacks. The article is divided into four narratives with different themes, through which Gary is defined: industry, racial strife, lost opportunities and de-industrialisation. Early accounts of Gary as an industrial city concentrate on the physical and socio-cultural characteristics. The city in the 1950s is described as ugly, dirty and polluted, yet at the same time an exotic place of immorality, vice, corruption and organised crime. In the 1960s racial animosity around social inequality and integration and an increase in violent crime resulted in 'white flight' from the city. The 1970s represented an era of lost opportunities. Gary was selected for the Model Cities programme and became an urban laboratory for renewal projects. Cracks soon emerged in the programme and entire communities and businesses moved out of Gary. Contributing factors include the failure of white working class advocacy groups to provide a voice for the people of Gary as a counter to the strong civil rights movement. A saturated steel market created by the recession was compounded by competition from automated rolling steel mills or 'mini-mills' and Japanese imports. These events caused US Steel to implement a rationalisation programme that involved closing old uneconomic mills and focusing on

productivity. Although Gary Works was designated as the flagship of US Steel and received additional investment, the mill became highly mechanised requiring less labour.

The author concludes that the narratives about Gary framed the way people perceive industrialism and industrial space by linking the city with wider issues. The residents may have a different version. The author cites the extensive oral histories compiled by other historians based on the past and present lived experiences of the inhabitants. It is suggested that the press and documentary makers have a biased perspective because they tend to focus on the negative aspects that results in an inaccurate portrayal of the city as it is today.

**Parkinson, M., Meegan, R. & Karecha, J. (2015). City Size and Economic Performance: Is Bigger Better, Small More Beautiful or Middling Marvellous? *European Planning Studies*, 23 (6), 1054-1068. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2014.904998>**

This paper examines the contribution of second tier cities to the national economy through evidence of economic performance. The authors investigate 150 capital and second-tier cities in 31 countries across Europe. The findings are based on quantitative data analysis, policy reviews and studies of individual cities comparing their performance during the European economic boom 2000-2007 with their performance post-2007 global financial crisis. Second tier cities are defined as those cities, excluding the capital, whose economic and social performance is significant enough to have an impact on the performance of the national economy. The key distinction between the two city types is largely administrative, however the city typology of the second-tier city can range from large regional capitals to smaller cities and some countries have several second-tier cities. Although individual cities may not contribute more than the capital, collectively they can. They also account, collectively, for a large proportion of the total population of a country. The authors argue that policy makers at the local and European government level should be doing more to initiate growth strategies for second-tier cities rather than focusing on capital cities.

The authors explore several different theoretical frameworks that explain economic growth: neoclassical endogenous growth theory and geographical economics; and institutional and evolutionary theories. These frameworks converge into two different policy recommendations: free market/place-neutral based and place-based approaches. The authors discuss how it is easier for policy makers and private investors to identify lower-risk opportunities in capital cities because they are the power base for government, business, education, research, ICT, transport and innovation and are connected into the global economy.

Findings indicate that during the boom years the total GDP in capital cities out-performed all others, with the exception of Germany and Italy. The authors explain that Germany is a unique case - a federal system with a strong regional banking structure, influential middle-sized firms and economic activity evenly distributed across cities. Generally many second-tier cities performed well, particularly in northern, central and western Europe. There were large regional disparities, with those in east and southeast lagging followed by a rapid growth as they transitioned into the market economy. The recession had a significant impact on all cities with over three-quarters of those analysed experiencing a drop in GDP. The worst affected were second-tier cities, but the better performers were in eastern Europe, particularly Poland. The authors point out that capital cities have their limits citing issues such as traffic congestion, land scarcity, urban sprawl and infrastructure deterioration

that can lead to decline. However, most countries do not have policies in place for second-tier cities. Neglect of these centres increases the risk of uneven development and missed opportunities to participate in the global economy. A key policy issue is how to ensure second-tier cities capture some of the capital city growth. The authors offer some ideas concerning what governments should be doing to make this happen, for example greater decentralisation of powers and resources to local government, ensuring that national policies can be shaped to local circumstances and encouraging voluntary collaboration between small cities to develop city-regions.

**Powe, N.A. (2012). Small town vitality and viability: learning from experiences in North East of England. *Environment and Planning A*, 44, 2225-2239. doi:<http://dx.doi.org.10/1068/a44596>**

The purpose of the paper is to investigate the opportunities and threats associated with the development and location of large-format retail outlets in small towns. These issues are explored through the impact of two developments on three towns in North East England: Morpeth (population circa 13,500), Alnwick (population circa 8,000) and Amble (population circa 6,000), a town near Alnwick. In Morpeth an outdated arcade was transformed into an Edwardian-style shopping mall providing 28 outlets and 8,000sm of retail space (an increase of 2,500sm). The Alnwick out-of-centre development is a retail park with a supermarket, DIY/garden centre, and catalogue store, providing a second service node for residents. There was no new development in Amble at the time. The town was under-served, although it was earmarked for a future out-of-centre supermarket. Findings from previous research of the cases undertaken before the development commenced were compared with post-development research. This consisted of questionnaire surveys of local and rural residents to understand changes in their shopping behaviour, surveys of pre-existing businesses to understand the impacts of the developments on their trade and a sub-survey of Amble locals to determine the likely impact of a new supermarket. The research also used interview data from seven key-actors, published data and information from a local documentary. Recall and contingent behaviour approaches were utilised to evaluate changes in consumer behaviour regarding the types of items purchased, the frequency of purchase and the location.

The author discusses the policy context of the three case studies. In the UK a 'town-centre-first' policy applies. The benefits of town centre retailing for residents arise from the density of the retail outlets, ease of pedestrian access and exposure to the kinds of social interaction that occur in a more compact environment. Large format retailing (LFR) provides economies of scale and a wider range of goods at a lower price. It is difficult for LF retailers to find the right location in town centres because the buildings do not fit in with the physical layout and character, unless they are willing to adapt/downsize their format. Thus LFRs tend to be located 'edge-of-centre', and as a last resort 'out-of-centre'. Four consumer behaviours associated with the introduction of LFR are explored in the context of store location: out-shopping, clawed back trade, linked trips and switching to new retail. The author discusses the key factors that influence shopper behaviour: proximity and distance-decay effect, the importance of anchor stores, complementarity in the retail offer and the physical design of the external environment (footpaths, car parks, lighting, signage). The author concludes that unless the supporting infrastructure is sufficient then LFR may be better in out-of-centre locations. The impact on neighbouring towns should also be taken into consideration.

The findings suggest that larger complexes, regardless of location, claw back trade to the towns to some degree. The results of the Morpeth study showed that residents were pleased with the improvements, citing the variety of shops. The mall also provided an anchor for the town centre by supporting trade along the main shopping street. The benefits of linked trips did not trickle down to the secondary retail areas, suggesting that proximity is not the key determinant. Perceptions of quality and complementarity of the retail offering are significant factors. The retail park in Alnwick also received favourable reviews, in particular the ease of car parking. The park did not alter perceptions of the town centre because it has many specialist shops that provide a complementary retail offering. However, less people were shopping in the town centre. Shoppers develop preferences for different locations depending on the kind of retail experience they are seeking. In the case of Amble, the rate of out-shopping was already high. The retail park increased out-shopping for food items, however few respondents reported switching behaviour for non-food items. The results of a further survey to explore the potential effect of a new supermarket indicate that the new LFR will claw back trade to the town centre.

**Powe, N.A. & Gunn, S. (2008). Housing development in market towns. Making a success of 'local service centres'? *Town Planning Review*, 79 (1), 125-148.**

The purpose of this paper is to investigate how well population growth through housing expansion supports market towns as rural service centres. The authors carried out a comparative case study analysis of four market towns in two different regions. Alnwick in Northumberland (population of 8,000) and Downham Market in Norfolk (population 7,000) were chosen due to their remoteness from large cities. Morpeth in Northumberland (population 13,500) and Wymondham in Norfolk (population 11,500) were selected because they are closer to larger cities. A mixed method approach is utilised consisting of: personally delivered house-to-house questionnaire surveys (with a return SAE) to investigate respondents' shopping patterns, work travel patterns and how they use their market town centre over the course of a day; document analysis; population statistics; and semi-structured interviews with key actors.

The authors contend that population increase through unrestrained residential development in market towns to boost local trade may not have the desired effect. Influencing factors taken into account by the authors for their working definition of 'sustainable development' include: (1) the economic viability of the town in terms of settlement size and the required infrastructure and services; (2) the level of service containment, which is influenced by the kinds of facilities provided, demographic characteristics, proximity to work and amenities, the extent of car usage and the topography; and (3) the capacity for expansion, along with any physical, environmental and social constraints to growth. The authors discuss the within-town and between-town factors that provide a framework for the study. The within-town factors include the retail potential of the town and the type and location of the housing development. Market towns can provide a more compact, less congested shopping centre and a competitive offering through specialist shops and by providing more personal service. Research suggests that developments closer to the town centre are attractive to retirees and people without cars. Between town factors include the geographical context and the regional policy context. Proximity to other larger urban areas will influence out-commuting particularly when there are good transport linkages. Finally, housing allocations are decided according to population and migration patterns, so some regions are under

more pressure than others. As a result of regional policy decisions, some market towns may be competing against each other in addition to the larger centres that are also trying to attract population and new housing for regeneration.

The results from the service usage study indicate that in all cases housing developments generated demand for food, non-food items and supported the local evening economy (restaurants and pubs). However, there was low engagement with the town by in-migrants (those who had migrated into the area within the past 15 years) and long-term residents. Thus although population growth has increased demand for goods and services within the towns, residents with cars also shop out-of-town due to the wider range of retail and service outlets. The authors suggest that there is plenty of scope for supermarket food shopping within the case study towns, but for retail and leisure activities residents will go to other centres, particularly when there is an attractor such as a theatre or cinema. Town centre or close to centre developments encourage the likelihood of food shopping and pub visits for socialising. The findings also indicate linkages between activities, for example people who shopped at town supermarkets also shopped from other food stores and there were similar findings for entertainment activities. The kinds of issues raised by respondents concerning the changing character of their towns include the significance of retail tourism, the need for affordable housing, fears around the capacity of existing services and infrastructure and the social acceptance of new housing in the context of perceived loss of community.

**Powe, N.A. & Hart, T. (2008). Market Towns: understanding and maintaining functionality. *Town Planning Review*, 79 (4), 347-370.**

Advances in mobility, communication and the changing nature of small towns as tourist attractions and retirement or commuter centres have challenged the traditional function of market towns as service centres to their hinterlands and providers of employment. The purpose of this article is to explore the concept of functionality and gain insight into the kinds of traditional functions that are maintained and the new functions that have emerged. The authors develop a framework to assess towns on their functionality and explore the challenges they face. The findings are based on a mixed methodology approach using statistical data from over 200 towns and document analysis and semi-structured interviews with key actors for the 11 case study towns (Alnwick, Morpeth, Keswick, Oswestry, Todmorden, Richmond, Downham Market, Wymondham, Haslemere, Crediton and Minehead). According to the 2001 census, the population range for these towns is between 4,500 and 13,500 inhabitants.

The paper commences with a discussion about the key factors identified from literature reviews that influence the current and potential functionality of market towns. The first factor, **context**, refers to the historical, architectural and aesthetic assets that make the towns appealing to live in and visit, the geographical location, and the national and regional policy context relating to which regions, cities or towns receive regeneration funding and the reasons behind those decisions. The second factor, **fewer boundaries**, is a reflection of the 'Open Society', where people have access to private transport and ICT. The implication is that the location of one's residence and business can be made on the basis of lifestyle preferences thus market towns have become centres for new functions for commuting, retirement living and the day-tripper economy. Finally the authors explore the implications of **functional change**. In some areas the demand for housing has created a substantial increase in house prices that can result in a social imbalance. Other concerns explored

include the potential adverse effect of improved linkages associated with leakage from the local economy and the physical and social capacity of towns to absorb housing growth. The authors discuss the three key approaches to classifying towns and the inherent problems associated with them: criteria/threshold, where towns are sorted into functional categories (large towns, commuter towns, tourist towns, rural towns and service and governance centres); cluster analysis; and idealised types, where typical characteristics are assembled to represent a fictional town. In order to address the short-comings of these approaches, the authors develop their own framework based on variables that cover the key issues facing market towns: location and accessibility; characteristics of town residents; structure of the economy; measures of affluence and deprivation; visitor attractions and services provided. The result is a description of the towns rather than a taxonomy of towns. The authors then used cluster analysis methodology in a novel way – each town is assessed against the five main functions of market towns (as service centres, visitor attractions, employment centres, housing commuters and housing the retired) in recognition that most market towns have several functions.

The findings for the towns are discussed in the context of the key functions. The authors conclude that market towns are complex, diverse, multi-functional communities. Results show that the larger, more remote towns still function as rural service centres. Picturesque small towns attract commuters who are prepared to travel a long distance to work and towns offering a better quality of life attract retirees. Some towns are popular second-home destinations. One of the key challenges is maintaining functionality as a service hub to their hinterlands and being able to cater to the specialised retail and service needs of other users - the long and short-term residents, visitors and tourists. Another key challenge is balancing the need for new housing development for in-migrants, social housing needs and infrastructure and service capacity. In towns with tight planning constraints and high demand, issues of housing affordability arise, particularly in towns where there is a local wage/house cost imbalance. Some towns are attempting to restrict development and protect the character by limiting their MTI funding allocations. The authors conclude that the main issues facing small towns include maintaining retail competitiveness, ensuring there is sufficient capacity to accommodate new housing development and ensuring that the needs of poorer or less able residents are taken into consideration in decision-making processes.

**Powe, N.A., Hart, T. & Bek, D. (2009). Market Town Centres in England: Meeting the Challenge of Maintaining their Contemporary Relevance. *Planning, Practice & Research*, 24 (93), 301-319. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02697450903020742>**

This paper follows on from Powe and Hart's (2008) investigation into market town functionality. The authors use the findings from the 11 case study towns to reflect on their regeneration prospects. The key objectives of the paper are to examine the current relevance of market towns, the issues they face and the probable success of different policy initiatives.

The authors provide a profile of each case study town in terms of location, demographic characteristics, tourism value, retail and service offering and recent/proposed regeneration activities. They observe that although all of the case study towns function as rural service centres to a certain degree, their ability to generate more local trade can be narrowed down to four factors: geography, proximity to larger towns, employment prospects and

population growth. The findings are framed in the context of three key issues that encourage trade and are thus paramount to the success of market towns. These issues in order of importance are: service offer, convenience and quality of experience. The issues are explored through a series of questions that draw on visitors' experiences of the towns. Service offer is considered as the main reason why people would visit the town, however it is an issue that local policy makers have the least control over. **Service offer** includes the kinds of everyday goods that can be purchased, options for food and drink, the reasons for visiting the town that make it a destination and the existence of an anchor that draws people to the town. An anchor is not necessarily a supermarket or LFR, it could be a restaurant or a specialist store that caters to higher order needs. **Convenience** relates to the compactness of small market towns and in particular, the issue of parking. Important questions include ease of navigation for motorists, finding parking within walking distance of the centre and the cost of parking. **Quality of experience** refers to the elements that go beyond functionality and make towns places of consumption and leisure. Elements include visitors' initial perceptions of the town, the significance of the place (heritage, aesthetic value), general atmosphere and friendliness of retailers and the kinds of activities and facilities available that contribute to making the visit enjoyable and memorable. The authors argue that successful market towns will integrate all of these aspects to make the town a place worth visiting. However, they also acknowledge that because market towns service such a wide range of visitors, establishing a specific identity is very challenging.

The three issues are used to evaluate the extent of regeneration required to meet these objectives, ranging from a face-lift to substantial redevelopment of the town centre with illustrations from the case study towns. In general, the authors observe that regeneration activities tend to be controversial mainly due to the disruption to trade of surrounding businesses from construction activities and the timeframes involved when there is an urgent need for improvement but delivery of the physical facilities is longer term. In addition, some towns face more constraints than others. The authors note that regeneration is particularly challenging for market towns experiencing population and employment growth as the development activities include new housing as well as changes to the town centre. Typical concerns about housing development focus on infrastructure capacity, sub-optimal design, the location of new developments and loss of character for the town. The authors suggest that towns need to do more to engage in-migrants and promote what the town centre has to offer. Population increase does not necessarily translate into increased trade for town centres if the draw is based on employment because residents with low engagement may prefer to out-shop. As the population expands within the town and in other settlements the likelihood of edge-of-centre or out-of-centre development for LFR increases.

The authors contend that the MTI has had a positive impact on small towns by encouraging the formation of business driven partnerships and local body programmes. The authors discuss Keswick where a Business Improvement District group has been set up, similar to a local Chamber of Commerce to get the town's businesses working together and find funding for specific projects. According to key actors from the towns, the MTI stimulated thinking, discussion and the development of a vision, ranging from how to capitalise on heritage assets to undertaking further work to develop strategies or develop master plans. It is argued that the latter, more visible strategies are more likely to encourage private investment. The authors conclude that although the application of local knowledge to problems is essential, engaging professionals in the process decreases the risk of tunnel vision and enhances the prospects for success.

**Powe, N. & Shaw, T. (2003). Market Towns: Investigating the Service Role through Visitor Surveys. *Planning, Practice & Research*, 18 (1), 37-50.**  
**doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0269745032000132628>**

Market towns in the UK draw in tourists due to their historical and architectural appeal, they contribute to the promotion of the larger rural area, they provide an outlet for local products and, although residents may choose to work and shop elsewhere, they provide a local option for top-up shopping. This paper investigates the current and likely future service role of market towns for different users. The findings are based on a questionnaire-based interview survey of 'visitors' at three market towns in northeast England. Visitors are classified as the town's hinterland inhabitants, people from other smaller settlements, those from larger urban areas and from other towns (excluding holidaymakers). All three towns are major service centres and public transport nodes but differ in their economic and locational characteristics. Alnwick in Northumberland (population circa 8,000) services a predominantly rural hinterland. Hexham in Northumberland (population circa 11,000) is strategically placed in the Tyne Valley, adjacent to a national park with good road and rail linkages. Bishop Auckland in County Durham (population circa 17,500) serves as the gateway to Wear Valley. The town's coal mining heritage, interesting history and distinctive architecture have made Bishop Auckland a popular tourist centre.

The authors discuss three key issues that impact the use of out-of-town services: location of housing, location of employment and accessibility. Typically new housing developments are located on the periphery of towns. Research suggests that when new housing is located in the town centre residents are more likely to use local shops and services. Research also suggests that work location influences out-shopping. Therefore if there are more opportunities for local employment, it more likely workers will shop locally and this will minimise leakage from the local economy. Most rural areas are poorly serviced by public transport, hence the necessity for car ownership or access to a car for inhabitants to visit their closest market town. However, car ownership also enables residents to out-shop.

The findings indicate that all three case study towns act as service centres for their rural hinterlands and draw a significant number of visitors from other settlements. For Bishop Auckland and Hexham a large proportion of visitors came from other settlements rather than the market town itself. In all cases the key motivation for visiting the town centre was the retail offering, the town centre services (banks) and the supermarket. The market in Alnwick and Hexham was a draw to visitors from other towns, and whilst there patrons utilised many other services. Those who lived and worked in the market towns visited the town centre more frequently, the majority walked there with driving a clear second. In order to assess the **potential** of each town for regeneration, the authors used the survey findings to explore the different opportunities and threats presented by the use of private vehicles, the Internet, and the evening economy and respondents' priorities for improvements. The authors observe that to retain customers and discourage out-shopping, market towns should tailor their retailing to the demands of their key customers, the local residents and their hinterlands. Improvements to paths and cycle ways will encourage local residents to their town centre and good transport links make a town appealing to people from other settlements (but may encourage out-shopping from the market town). Although residents of smaller rural settlements had the highest proportion of Internet access, banking services was the most popular, followed by clothing and other services and is not considered a threat. Pubs are the most popular form of evening entertainment, however respondents expressed a desire for a wider range of entertainment options reflecting the changing



demographic characteristics (aging and affluent population). The study produced two key findings. Firstly, there is a lot of diversity between towns around the range of services used and although they face similar issues, they have different priorities. The implication is that it is important to involve the local community with local knowledge in policy generation. Secondly, the study demonstrates that there is a wide range of visitors seeking services in these centres, therefore the perspectives of these relevant groups should be taken into account when selecting the priorities.

**Rich, M.A. (2012). "From Coal to Cool": The Creative Class, Social Capital, and the Revitalization of Scranton. *Journal of Urban Affairs*, 35 (3), 365-384. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2012.00639.x>**

The paper examines small town revitalisation in the context of Scranton, a rust-belt city in Northeastern Pennsylvania, USA. Scranton was once a centre for coal mining, iron and steel production. The town experienced deindustrialization and subsequent shrinkage from the 1950s. The purpose of the paper is to investigate the perceptions of key stakeholders in their revitalisation activities in the downtown area and identify the factors that motivate them. The research method involves semi-structured interviews with business owners, city and non-profit administrators and arts community leaders. The findings are discussed in the context of Florida's creative class theory and Putnam's social capital theory.

The author argues that downtown areas are critical to cities because they are typically the place where parades, festivals and civic functions are held, activities that have symbolic meaning for many Americans. The author examines the different strategies used to revitalise Scranton commencing in the 1980s with a multi-million dollar publicly funded redevelopment plan that incorporated a luxury hotel, convention centre and a large shopping mall that now has a high retail vacancy rate. More recent developments are aimed at creating a consumer-based downtown area. Strategies include supporting business expansion through fiscal incentives, investing in art and cultural amenities and providing more housing opportunities to attract new people to the town. Scranton has also had a change in image. The city was rebranded the "Electric City" to commemorate the fact that it was the first city in America to have a streetcar system and later, was selected as the location for the USA version of the television series 'The Office'. These attempts at rebranding are perceived as quick-fix changes. Stakeholders acknowledge that Scranton has an appealing authentic culture. The 'small-townness' has enabled the formation of strong social networks (community, family and institutional) that should be maintained. Some stakeholders perceive that a tight-knit community can stymie progress. The author concludes that by focusing on livability and quality of life Scranton could be seen as a desirable place to live by outsiders and locals alike.

**Richardson, R. & Powe, N. (2004). Service Implications of Population Growth in Market Towns in the UK. *Planning, Practice & Research*, 19 (4), 363-373. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/026974502000343217>**

This paper investigates how an increase in population in market towns can boost trade for retail and leisure services. The findings are based on a case study of Penrith (population 2002: 15,000), a market town in northwest England that over the past 20 years has

experienced an increase in population. Specifically, the research compares the characteristics, attitudes and use of services of residents living in old and new housing, then examines the effect of new housing on town centre trade. The author conducted five semi-structured interviews with key actors knowledgeable about the housing market and planning policies. The interviews were followed by a questionnaire survey administered to households in two peripheral housing estates in the ward of Carlton (around 500 households in total). One estate was built in the 1960s-70s and the other in the 1990s.

The results of the survey revealed a significant proportion of the residents owned cars. Comparing the characteristics of residents from the two housing types, residents from the newer housing had not lived in Penrith for a long time and a higher proportion commuted to other centres for work. These characteristics were reflected in premium house prices and income differentials. Most respondents from both estates did their main food shop in Penrith and out-shopped at a similar proportion for other goods, mainly in the closest city Carlisle. One surprising result with regards to attitudes to shopping revealed that in-migrants (those who arrived in the last 10 years) were more positive than longer-term residents about shopping in Penrith. The author suggests that perhaps both groups of residents are looking for a change in their shopping habits. In households where adults worked full-time, respondents were less likely to feel they could get everything they needed. The author suggests that the key to success depends on a town's ability to provide the kind of non-food retail outlets and shopping experiences and to provide something new that cannot be found in larger centres but is demanded by residents. A high proportion of residents also visited Penrith town centre for evening entertainment, in particular the cinema, pubs and restaurants. Results indicate that leisure users were mostly non-retirees, however affluence and perceptions of safety may also influence the evening economy. The author agrees with other researchers that the development concentration policy should be applied to towns where it will be most effective. In order to select towns a better understanding of the characteristics of in-migrants and the kinds of goods, services and retail experiences they are seeking is required.

**Robertson, K.A. (1999). Can Small City Downtowns Remain Viable? *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 65 (3), 270-283.**  
**doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01944369098976057>**

The article investigates the issues and development strategies in small city downtown areas then compares these to findings from studies of large cities. The findings are based on data received from the planning departments of 57 small cities (population 25,000-50,000) through a nation-wide survey and further fieldwork in five of those centres. The site visits incorporated interviews with public officials and business leaders and a review of city plans, reports and newspaper articles.

Survey respondents were asked to rate the severity of thirteen problems identified from the literature review in their downtown area. Key issues highlighted include: the difficulties encountered in attracting new development due to insufficient market area; the lack of attractions for weekend or nightlife activities; the shortage of suitable housing; a negative image; and the presence of the 'white elephant'. These eyesores are the large strategically located now vacant hotels, department stores, casinos and theatres that symbolise decline and are more noticeable in small towns than large cities. Respondents were asked to assess the success of sixteen downtown redevelopment strategies. The author divided these into

four broad categories: creating a sense of place; generating activity; supplementing downtown improvements and making improvements in transportation. Creating a strong sense of place is the most popular approach and can be accomplished through several techniques. Key methods include the historic preservation of older commercial buildings, the Main Street approach, enhancing pedestrianism through streetscape improvements and the development of waterfronts. Unlike larger centres, generating activity through stadiums, indoor malls and convention centres is uncommon in small cities due to the cost and the low level of perceived usefulness of such endeavours (unless the city serves as a regional centre with a large market area). More common and successful is new office development that has arisen from the move from retail to a service based local economy. Extending activity in the downtown area to the evenings and weekends is principally accomplished by providing more housing and promoting tourism. It is noted that entertainment and nightlife is not a feature of the downtown areas studied – although some of the cities had casinos and performing arts theatres they lacked the restaurants and bars to support a thriving nightlife.

The author discusses the policy implications for small towns from the study. Building strong public/private partnerships and encouraging collaboration between city departments and business organisations is critical to the success of downtown revitalisation. Successful downtowns are the result of strategies that have built on and improved their existing intrinsic assets that make them unique. Multi-functional environments that combine work, housing, entertainment, cultural and tourist attractions generate high levels of activity that sustain the inner city area. Finally, it is critical to establish a distinct sense of place in the inhabitants' minds by preserving the cultural heritage and repositioning the downtown area as an attractive alternative to suburbia.

**Sánchez-Moral, S. (2017). The mobility of 'creative workers' and their potential contribution to the recovery of old industrial cities in Spain. *The Town Planning Review*, 88 (1), 93-107.**

Many old industrial cities have used urban cultural policy within regeneration strategies to reinvent themselves as 'post-industrial' cities. The activities associated with urban renewal are similar to those promoted by Florida in his concept of the 'creative class', specifically, promoting knowledge intensive and creative industries, attracting talent and/or up-skilling workers. However, many scholars question the effectiveness of such policies and the ability of old mono-specialised industrial cities to attract talent. The author points out that restructuring caused dramatic job loss and the service economy has not matured sufficiently to fill the gap. This paper investigates the debate by examining the stock and flow of creative workers in nine homogeneous old industrial cities located in four regions on the northern coast of Spain: Ferrol, Avilés, Langreo, Mieres, Torrelavega, Barakaldo, Basauri, Portugalete and Santurzi. The case study cities have populations of between 40,000 and 250,000 inhabitants. The three key objectives of the study are to determine how many creative workers are living in these cities, the role of the cities in human migration patterns and the potential impact of these workers on the local economies. The author utilises longitudinal data from the CSWH database, a yearly sample of workers registered with the social security system. Salaried and self-employed workers are identified as 'creative' according to sector and occupation profiles. Additional factors in the analysis include the location changes that occurred, the geographical origin of workers by region and countries of birth, education and income levels.

The author discusses the different theoretical approaches to understanding migration patterns. The micro-economic approach suggests that the decision to migrate is based on expected returns and costs and is therefore largely driven by personal characteristics such as age, gender, family status, educational background and qualifications. However, the approach ignores the concept of 'bounded mobility' where family based relationships and social networks may be influencing factors. The macro-economic approach looks at human capital flows in terms of regional performance. Highly qualified people migrate from declining centres to dominant cities where there are better opportunities and higher salaries. Cumulative growth is derived from knowledge spillovers, further reinvestment and improvements in quality of life and amenities.

The author explains that each town is in a different stage of recovery and discusses the kinds of activities undertaken to attract and retain talent. The findings indicate that overall a very small proportion of the state's employment stock is in knowledge intensive/creative industries, but there is a higher proportion in creative occupations. The results show that workers are moving from smaller cities to larger dominant cities, the most significant contributing factor being lack of job opportunities. The findings also show that there is intra-regional migration of the local creative workforce from smaller towns to old industrial centres, however these centres do not attract foreign talent. The author concludes that finding strategies to bolster economic diversification may be a better way of retaining talent than investing in flagship cultural projects.

**Sánchez-Moral, S., Méndez, R. & Prada-Trigo, J. (2015). Resurgent Cities: Local Strategies and Institutional Networks to Counteract Shrinkage in Avilés (Spain). *European Planning Studies*, 23 (1), 33-52.**

The authors use Avilés, a coastal city in the Asturias region of Spain, as a comparative case study to examine the role of external and internal agents in the revitalisation process to combat shrinkage. Avilés was an iron and steel city dominated by one large public company. The city experienced rapid industrialization followed by de-industrialisation in the 1970's when the steel industry was in crisis. The subsequent economic decline left a physical mark on the landscape of Avilés – obsolescent commercial infrastructure, industrial ruins and wasteland and polluted waterways. The author proposes that there are three local factors that stimulate revitalisation – local body leadership, business networking and networking between cities. The research methods used to investigate the revitalisation of the city include fieldwork, semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders, a review of planning documents, recently published studies of similar hubs and newspaper articles.

The paper examines revitalisation in the context of the city Master Plan and the key completed and proposed regeneration projects. Three urban planning strategies are identified – economic growth, creative economy and quality of life. Examples include expansion of the port, the building of a business park on industrial wasteland, a technology centre, a cultural centre and a future innovation island. Strategies to improve the quality of life for residents and promote urban sustainability include a clean-up of the estuary, the provision of a wider range of public services and rehabilitation of the historic city centre to encourage commercial activity and tourism. Network analysis traces the involvement of external and local parties in these projects. The role of the Avilés City Council as a local agent in leading revitalisation initiatives is highlighted.

Although the city has made significant progress towards revitalisation, several challenges are noted in going forward with the development process. Due to the prevailing economic crisis in Spain and that Asturias has been considered a 'phasing out' region the need to develop private/public partnerships is considered critical. Avilés is competing with two larger nearby cities with superior infrastructure that offer a wider range of services. There are also concerns about the environmental impact of the remaining heavy industry that help sustain the city on a future city potentially based on tourism, culture and a knowledge economy. The authors emphasise the importance of multi-governance networks and conclude that in this case a regional rather than a local approach may be more beneficial.

**Schilling, J. & Logan, J. (2008). Greening the Rust Belt. A Green Infrastructure Model for Right Sizing America's Shrinking Cities. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 74 (4), 451-466. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01944360802354956>**

The purpose of this paper is to examine the different revitalisation strategies of older industrial cities to transform vacant and derelict properties into green infrastructure. The paper is based on fieldwork carried out through the National Vacant Properties Campaign, the authors' knowledge of innovative reclamation programmes in the larger cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Richmond, Lawrence and Toronto and the smaller cities of Flint and Youngstown and interviews with policy makers and city planners.

The authors examine the strategies in the context of shrinking cities. These cities are characterised by a prolonged and significant decrease in population paralleled by an increase in vacant, abandoned and blighted properties that affects all property market sectors. The authors discuss the concept of right-sizing which is essentially aligning the built environment with anticipated needs. Part of this process involves stabilising the property market through controlled land release policies. The authors provide an outline of existing macro-level right-sizing strategies then present their own model. They argue that the conversion of vacant space into green infrastructure is a potential right-sizing strategy. The authors explore the benefits of urban greening in terms of environmental, social and economic outcomes and discuss how vacant land can create new economic opportunities from emerging green markets in biofuels and commodities. The authors acknowledge the barriers to creating green infrastructure: legal issues, funding, the risk associated with a low ROI, ongoing maintenance and lack of leadership. Traditionally green infrastructures refer to unspoiled, undeveloped spaces. In shrinking cities potential sites for future parks, community agricultural plots, recreation trails and urban forests may have little remaining natural environment or suffer from environmental contamination making the process more complex and expensive. Several greening projects in larger American cities are explored. The role of PPPs and engagement of non-profit organisations and neighbourhood groups in the initial planning, project implementation and ongoing maintenance is required for projects to be successful. A comprehensive approach to how cities could go about a right-sizing programme is provided.

The authors conclude that right-sizing will require a rethink of zoning systems, legislative reforms to provide property reclamation strategies, robust research and data to support the proposed reforms and a network of shrinking cities that can share information and work collaboratively to resolve these issues.

**Sousa, S. & Pinho, P. (2015). Planning for Shrinkage: Paradox or Paradigm. *European Planning Studies*, 23 (1), 12-32. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2013.820082>**

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the meaning of 'shrinkage' and investigate the kinds of planning policies that address and manage shrinkage or attempt to reverse the trend. According to the authors the term 'urban shrinkage' refers to cities that have experienced prolonged population decrease and job loss. Shrinkage has a spatial impact that can lead to decline in the physical and social structure of a place and eventual stigmatisation.

The discussion is based on a literature review with a global perspective. The authors examine the key city typologies identified by scholars and discuss the different perspectives on how shrinkage could be measured. They conclude that shrinkage is a synonym for a collection of trends that underlies the transformation that initiates a decline in population. Shrinkage affects all types of territorial boundaries - regions, metropolitan areas, cities, suburbs, small towns and rural areas. The effects may not be evenly distributed across territory and are revealed in different types of population patterns. The authors explore the impacts of population decline and reduced population density on the built environment in the context of social and physical impacts. Visible signs include an increase in the number of vacant buildings, derelict land, general deterioration in the environment and oversized and/or underutilized infrastructure and transportation systems. Issues arise when dwindling tax revenue revenues are insufficient to pay for the fixed costs of providing and maintaining basic public infrastructure. However, downsizing will also have costs. Although changes in the built environment can provide opportunities, the biggest issue is attracting investment due to return risk. The authors discuss the various approaches and strategies urban planners use to deal with shrinkage. Most approaches are growth oriented and entail harnessing the local social, intellectual and cultural capital and inevitably involve some type of building. Financial strategies tend to be reactive and adaptive-based, for example ways to deal with vacant property and the provision of incentives.

Rather than interpret shrinkage as a problem, the authors suggest that the phenomenon is framed as part of a pattern of urban development — growth, slow growth, stabilisation and shrinkage. The authors conclude that an apparent obsession with growth and the use of existing planning instruments and policies is not particularly helpful in tackling shrinkage. They argue that shrinkage provides an opportunity to re-conceptualise the relationship between land use, transportation, ecology and the provision of quality of life for residents. There should be plans in place for urban development that incorporates growth and shrinkage.

**Thomas, C.J. & Bromley, R.D.F. (2002). The Changing Competitive Relationship between Small Town Centres and Out-of-Town Retailing: Town Revival in South Wales. *Urban Studies*, 39 (4), 791-817. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00420980220119570>**

This paper explores whether reinvestment in retail in a traditional town centre that faced significant competition through retail decentralisation was successful. Small town centres are important because they provide communities with a commercial and social focus. The

article is based on a longitudinal case study of Llanelli (population circa 35,000) a small town centre located 12 miles southwest of the sub-regional shopping centre of Swansea. Llanelli was already experiencing strong competition from a number of superstores and retail warehouse developments within a few miles of the town centre when consent was given for a retail park, a large out-of-centre complex, some 2 miles away. The development was approved on the assumption that a new retail park would help curb out-shopping to the other centres and that the existing supermarket and anchor store, Tesco, would stay. Tesco's decision to relocate to the retail park had significant negative consequences for the town because the company placed a covenant over the lease preventing the building being used for future food retailing. The borough council, in collaboration with the Welsh Development Agency, initiated a comprehensive regeneration strategy starting with environmental improvements to existing infrastructure to make shopping in the town centre a more pleasant and safe experience. The second phase involved the construction of a new covered shopping precinct that integrated into the existing shops, anchored by a food superstore, and supported by improved parking facilities and linkages to public transport.

The author uses several methods to investigate the major changes in retail that occurred between 1988 and 1999. Two indicators and contributing factors of changing commercial status - decline and commercial regeneration - were identified to evaluate the plans of the town's shopping precinct over three time periods. Interviewer administered questionnaire surveys of shoppers in the town centre and the retail park prior to completion of the precinct in 1997 and again in 1999 explored their shopping behaviour for specific types of goods, the frequency of use of both facilities and attitudes towards different characteristics of the town centre to evaluate its attractiveness. The analysis of the Goad plans indicated that the development was large enough to have a positive impact. The new centre provided the vitality that was previously lacking and had a positive spill-over effect into the adjacent commercial areas. The questionnaire analysis revealed that the new anchor food store was critical in clawing back business from the retail park. Although the town centre remained a popular choice for clothing shopping it could not compete with the retail park bulk offering in DIY and furniture. The town centre scored well on increased satisfaction with the shopping environment, the range of goods, price competitiveness and transport. Although the outcome is positive, the author argues that revitalisation projects are not a one-off event. There are some negative aspects of the town centre that still need to be addressed. The town centre will need to continue to evolve if it wants to maintain or enhance its status in a dynamic retail environment.

**Turok, I. (1992). Property-led regeneration: panacea or placebo? *Environment and Planning A*, 24, 361-379.**

This paper is a seminal work in property-led regeneration research. The purpose of the article is to discuss how property contributes to urban economic regeneration in the context of private sector, market-led development in the UK. The article commences with a description of the key features of property development. The author discusses five ways that property could generate positive economic effects for a city or region and highlights some of the drawbacks of relying on each method.

The first two ways discuss property from an economic perspective. Firstly, construction related activity provides employment and income for not only those directly involved but in associated roles. Although there is a broad range of construction sectors, the effects from

any one segment may be short-lived due to several factors including demand patterns, cyclical investment and the finite timeframe of a construction project. Often jobs go to more skilled people living elsewhere. Secondly, local firms looking to expand require a supply of land and buildings with specific features that will contribute to productivity, occupier comfort and accommodate technological requirements. Lack of appropriate space can hinder expansion and drive firms elsewhere. Developers want to make a profit and take into account the costs of construction and refurbishment, rent levels and prevailing leasing requirements of prospective tenants before they commit. Thirdly, property can attract inward investment and provide employment. Research shows that commercial and industrial property occupiers, investors, developers and lenders are location sensitive. The area must be able to supply or attract the skill base required and offer an acceptable quality of life for the workforce.

The remaining two ways frame property as the physical focus for activity. Property can contribute to revitalising declining neighbourhoods through enhancing the physical appearance of an area. Housing driven strategies have had some success. People's perceptions change, a neighbourhood becomes a more attractive place to live and work and will attract investment. However, the author notes that although physical rehabilitation of the environment can improve quality of life for residents, it does not resolve the underlying economic issues of high unemployment and low incomes among the local population. One of the longer-term outcomes is gentrification where the benefits of rehabilitation are capitalised on by newcomers making the area too expensive for locals. Finally, property can play a role in regeneration when an entire area undergoes economic restructuring. This typically occurs when there are large areas of vacant under-utilised land or obsolescent structures. Local bodies purchase the land and provide the physical infrastructure for large-scale private development - office complexes, hotels, conference centres, shopping malls, apartments and mixed-use developments. The area is rebranded in the hope that this will attract new occupiers, jobs will be created and the benefits will trickle down to unemployed people in the local community. These projects are highly speculative and may not result in economic regeneration in the long-term. Regeneration based on goods and leisure activities is dependent on a sound economy.

The author concludes that property development has limitations and should not be the main focus of urban regeneration policy. One of the key criticisms of property development is that it diverts money away from investment in other business activities that contribute to economic growth. Although property development does contribute to economic growth and improve quality of life for some citizens, it does not address the more fundamental determinants of urban economic conditions that relate to the workforce (education and training), the competitiveness of production and investment in infrastructure. Property development needs to be managed.

**Yakubu, I.E., Egbelakin, T., Dizhur, D., Ingham, J., Park, K.S. & Phipps, R. (2017). Why are older inner-city buildings vacant? Implications for town center regeneration. *Journal of Urban Regeneration and Renewal*, 11 (1), 44-59.**

The purpose of this article is to highlight the effects of urban shrinkage on building stock, many of which are heritage buildings, in the central business districts of provincial New Zealand and investigate why the demand for this building stock is low. The focus of the research is a suburb that encompasses the main high street of a provincial town on the west



coast of the North Island that has experienced a steady decline in population dating back to 2006. The study had three key objectives: (1) To investigate the proportion of totally or partially vacant (mainly upper floors) of older heritage buildings, (2) Identify the factors responsible for the high vacancy rate; and (3) Provide suggestions as to how to increase demand for older buildings.

The literature review examines the key indicators of urban shrinkage and decay, the social and economic consequences of old vacant buildings in suburban areas, the impact of seismic strengthening and building regulations and typical town centre regeneration strategies used elsewhere. A mixed-methods approach was used to address the key objectives. The first method, a field survey, involved an assessment of the buildings through direct visual observation of their condition and where accessible the internal floor space, and an evaluation of other physical features such as disability and car park access that can influence the desirability of commercial premises to lessees. Twenty face-to-face interviews were carried out with a cross-section of stakeholders including building owners, real estate agents, council officers, heritage trust representatives, property valuers and architects/town planners to establish the causal factors.

The findings suggest that there are four key causal factors contributing to the high vacancy rate (86 percent) for heritage buildings in the suburb: physical, social, economic and regulatory. Looking at the physical factors, findings revealed that aesthetically 64 percent were in poor condition, 26 percent in average condition and 10 percent were in good condition, 79 percent had no disability access and 65 percent had poor car parking access for building occupiers and users (for example, paid parking, time restricted, no private parking). The social causal factors in decreasing order of importance include population decline, gradual emigration from the inner city to the urban fringes, poor disability and car park access, competition from new buildings in the urban fringes and low demand for older buildings. The economic factors in descending order of importance include low property values of historic buildings caused by insurance companies refusing to insure the buildings and banks unwilling to lend to building owners for redevelopment. Owners lacked the motivation to redevelop leading to a depressed property market. Results revealed that foreign investors have little interest in retaining heritage value and are less concerned about vacant upper floors. Finally, there is a perception that occupiers are willing to pay lower rentals for building stock around the back streets. Building regulations have had a huge impact on the fate of these buildings. For example, 89 percent perceive that building code compliance for change of use and seismic strengthening has prompted many owners to abandon buildings that are less than 33 percent NBS. Major tenant retailers, banks and government offices require at least double the minimum rating for new tenancy agreements. If owners are willing to strengthen the buildings occupiers may place additional requirements in terms of aesthetics and accessibility to a level beyond which owners are prepared to stretch to financially so buildings will remain vacant.

The researchers urge local councils to promote redevelopment and reuse of vacant historic buildings. Building owners should be motivated to redevelop their buildings by considering alternative solutions such as converting upper floors to drive-in car parks or redeveloping them into restaurants, offices, hotels and shops. The authors suggest that an adaptive reuse strategy where adaptation processes are founded on new technologies and design concepts could be a sustainable way forward and minimise the economic, social and environmental costs. The paper discusses the introduction of incentives such as floor-space indexes and property tax exemptions. Researchers also suggest that local government could do more to

mitigate further shrinkage by introducing job-generating measures to attract new inhabitants and cultural activities to draw in more visitors.



